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REFLECTIONS

ON

DEATH.

BY WILLIAM DODD, L. L. D.
Late Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of St. Davids.

CORRECTED AND ENLARGED WITH OCCASIONAL NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY G. WRIGHT, ESQ.
Author of "Solitary Walks," &c.

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TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE EARL OF BUTE,

FIRST LORD OF HIS MAJESTY'S TREASURY,
KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER
OF THE GARTER, &c. &c.

MY LORD,

WHATEVER may be the execution of the little performance which I have the honour to present to your lordship, it will derive some merit, I am persuaded, in your lordship's sight, from the good meaning wherewith it was written, from the suitableness to my profession, and from the importance of its subject. Perhaps too, its author's undissembled respect for your lordship may give it some additional value, for true respect, we are assured, can give value to the smallest offerings from the hands of the poorest.

But, indeed, I did not know to whom I could, with greater propriety, inscribe a work of this nature, than to a nobleman, whose regular life, and punctual discharge of all the social duties must render Reflections on Death not unpleasing; whose regard to works of literature hath always been eminent

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and consistent; and who, though continually employed in affairs of the highest moment, hath testified that regard by the most favourable attention to men of science and learning.

From hence, my lord, we are encouraged to promise the fairest days to good letters and good manners;—they cannot but flourish under your discerning eye, and the fostering patronage of our beloved monarch; in whose unsullied virtues, while his people felicitate themselves, no grateful man can be insensible of the honour, which redounds to the illustrious person, who had so considerable a share in forming the royal mind to virtue; and inspiring it with those great, just, and patriot sentiments, which have obtained to our sovereign, from his subjects, that most honourable of all appellations,—the Good.

Happy in your prince's favour, my lord, and happy in the consciousness of your own integrity, you will go on to deserve and to obtain the esteem and affection of all men of science, of virtue, and religion. So will your name be placed high in that temple of true glory, where the whispers of malevolence, and the clamours of faction, shall never be heard: where envy, the unfailing shadow of merit, shall never be permitted to enter: and where—when that melancholy hour is come, which no might nor greatness in mortality can delay—that hour, in which

you, my lord, shall be lost to your friends, to your country, to your king, your monument shall proclaim the glorious truth, that "You were a principal instrument in putting "an end to a war, uncommonly wide and ex- "tensive; and of restoring peace to an ex- "hausted and depopulated world."

I am, my lord, with the most respectful acknowledgments for this indulgence,

Your Lordship's
most obliged and devoted
humble servant,
WILLIAM DODD.

Westham, Jan. 1, 1763.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THESE Reflections were first written with a design to be published in a small volume proper to be given away by well-disposed persons at funerals, or on any other solemn occasion. But the editors of the Christian's Magazine, supposing they might be of some service to that useful and well-esteemed work, requested the author first to print them there, and afterward to pursue his original design. Accordingly, they were printed in separate chapters, and he hath reason to be satisfied with the reception they met with. His best prayers accompany them in their present form, that they may be found useful to mankind.

REFLECTIONS ON DEATH.

CHAP. I.

——————To die—to sleep—
No more: and by a sleep, to say, we end
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd—to die, to sleep—
To sleep!—perchance to dream: aye, there's the rub,
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of times,
Th' oppressor's wrongs, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes—
But that the dread of something after death
(That undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns) puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear the ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of.

SHAKESPEARE.

A FEW evenings ago, I was called to perform the last sad office to the sacred remains of a departed friend and neighbour.*

* Ministers who are often called to attend the dying-beds and funerals of the young and old, the rich and poor, professors and profane, are best calculated, or at least best furnished with materials, to enforce on all, the necessity of reflecting on death, and preparing for it.

It is too commonly found, that a familiarity with death, and a frequent recurrence of funerals, graves, and church-yards, serve to harden rather than humanize the mind; and to deaden rather than excite those becoming reflections, which such objects seem excellently calculated to produce. Hence the physician enters, without the least emotion, the gloomy chambers of expiring life: the undertaker handles without concern the clay-cold limbs: and the sexton whistles unappalled, while his spade casts forth from the earth the mingled bones and dust of his fellow creatures.* And, alas! how often have I felt with indignant reluctance my wandering heart engaged in other speculations, when called to minister at the grave, and to consign to the tomb the ashes of my fellow-creatures!

Yet nothing teacheth like death:† and though perhaps the business of life would grow torpid, and the strings of activity be loosed, were men continually hanging over the meditation—yet, assuredly, no man should fail to keep the great object in view; and seasonably to reflect that the important

* See yonder maker of the dead man's bed,
The Sexton . . . . . .
. . . . . Poor wretch! he minds not
That soon some trusty brother of the trade,
Shall do for him what he hath done for thousands.
BLAIR'S GRAVE.

† Wait the great teacher death. DR. YOUNG.

moment is coming, when he too must mingle with his kindred clay ; when he too must appear before God's awful judgment-seat ; when he too must be adjudged by a fixed, irrevocable, and eternal decree.*

As I entered the church-yard,

> Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap :
> Where—each in his narrow cell forgotten laid,

so many of my friends, my neighbours, and my fellow-creatures, lie mouldering in dust : struck with the slow and solemn sound of the deep-toned bell, and particularly impressed with the afflicting circumstances of his death, whose obsequies I was going to perform, I found the involuntary tear rush from mine eyes, and the unbidden sigh heave in my labouring bosom.†

And, Oh Death, mighty conqueror, I could not forbear saying, in the silence of unaffected meditation—Oh Death, how terrible, how wonderful thou art ! Here I stand, full of life ; health smiling on my cheek, and sparkling in my eye ; my active feet ready to bear me briskly along, and my

* It it appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. Heb. ix. 27.

This is one of the most awful texts in the sacred writings, and cannot be too much insisted on and enforced, both from the pulpit and the press.

† The reader cannot but observe these reflections are written in a similar style to Hervey's celebrated Meditations ; a style Dr. Dodd was peculiarly fond of, and adopted particularly in the pulpit, as the most pleasing, affecting, and energetic.

hands prompt to execute their appointed office; scenes of pleasing felicity are before me; the comforts of domestic serenity dwell seemingly secure around me; and my busy soul is planning future improvements of happiness and peace.—But the moment is coming, perhaps is near, when life's feeble pulse shall play no longer; these eyes no more sparkle, nor this cheek glow with health; that, pale as the shroud that invests me, and those closed to unclose and awaken no more on earth; the feet shall decline their function, and the useless hands fall heavily down by my side.* Farewel then all the engaging and endearing scenes around me; farewel the comforts of domestic peace: my much-loved friend shall weep tenderly over me; and my thinking, restless, busy soul at length find sweet repose, and be anxious no more.

It is fixed: and all the powers of earth can neither arrest nor divert the sure, unerring dart! but with consummate wisdom the great Lord of the world, hath wrapped

* Dr. Watts happily meditates on the dissolution of the body, in the following lines;

And must this body die,
This mortal frame decay?
And must these active limbs of mine,
Lie mould'ring in the clay?
Corruption, earth, and worms
Shall but refine this flesh,
Till my triumphant spirit comes
To put it on afresh.

up the important moment in impenetrable darkness from human view; that from the cradle we might have the solemn object before us, and act as men, because as men we must die!

Let me then not labour to divert the improving speculation, but advance still nearer, and see, if I can learn, what it is to die!

To die! Oh you, my friends, amidst whose graves I now am wandering—you, who not long since, like me, trod this region of mortality, and drank the golden day*—with you the bitterness of death is past; you have tasted what that is, which so much perplexes the human thought, of which we all know so little, and yet of which we all must know so much! Oh! could you inform me what it is to die, could you tell me what it is to breathe the last gasp; what are the sensations of the last convulsion, of the last pang of dissolving nature! Oh could you tell me how the soul issues from the lifeless dwelling which it has so long inhabited! what unknown worlds are discovered to its view; how it is affected with the amazing prospect; how it is affected with the remembrance and regard of things left here below—Oh could ye tell me—but alas! how vain the wish!†—clouds and darkness

* See Dr. Young's Night Thoughts, Night IV. line 144.

† But ah! no notices they give,
Nor tell us how or where they live;

rest upon it: and nothing but experience must be allowed to satisfy these anxious researches of dying rationals.

Yet let us not forbear these researches: or at least not relinquish the interesting meditation. For what can be of equal importance to a man, destined inevitably to tread the path of death—what of equal importance to examine, as whither that path leads, and how it may be trod successfully ?*—what of equal importance for a pilgrim of a day to contemplate, as that great event which must open to him a state unalterable and without end ?

All men must tread that gloomy path—It is appointed for all men once to die.—Adam's curse is upon all his posterity.† Dust they are, and to dust they must return.—But whither leads that gloomy path !—Alas, in the heathen world, with a bewildered mind they sought the resolution of that question—Death was dreadful indeed in such circumstances; for if we want the glad hope

> As if bound up by solemn fate,
> To keep the secret of their state;
> To tell their joys nor pains to none,
> That man might live by faith alone.
>
> SOLITARY WALKS.

* . . . . The thought of death indulge,
Give it its wholesome empire, let it reign,
That kind chastiser of the soul in joy.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

† Rom. v. vii.

of immortality to cheer our departing souls, what affliction can even be conceived more affecting than death and dissolution, a separation from all we hold dear upon earth, and a perfect annihilation of all future expectations ?*

Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel: and the question is answered clearly from that book whence alone we can gain information on this point—"Once to die, and after that be judged.†—We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." Oh my soul, how awful a reflection! can any thing more be wanting to inspire thee with the most serious purposes, and most devout resolves, than the certainty of death, the assurance of judgment, the knowledge of mortality!

And after death be judged !‡ Tell me no more of the pangs of death, and the torment of corporeal sufferings :—What, what is this, and all the evils of life's contracted span to the things that follow after ?§—This

* Annihilation is an after thought,
A monstrous wish, unborn till virtue dies.
Dr. Young.

† Acts xxvii. 31.

‡ Well might Felix tremble, when St. Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. Acts xxiv. 25.

§ . . . . . If there's an hereafter,
And that there is, Conscience uninfluenc'd,

it is which makes death truly formidable, which should awaken every solemn reflection, and stimulate every rational endeavour!

To be judged! to be sentenced by an irreversible decree, to an allotment eternal and unchangeable; an allotment of consummate felicity, or consummate distress.*

Oh immortality, how much doth the thought of thee debase in their value every earthly enjoyment, every earthly pursuit and possession†—and shew man to himself in a point of view, which amply discovers his true business on earth, which amply discovers the true dignity of his nature, and forcibly reproves his wretched attachment to all sublunary things.

And methinks, as if a voice were speaking from yonder grave—I hear a solemn whisper to my soul!

"Every grave proclaims thy own mortality! child of the dust, be humble and grow wise! a few days since, like thee I flourished in the fair field of the earthly world! a

> And suffer'd to speak out, tells every man;
> Then must it be an awful thing to die.
>
> BLAIR'S GRAVE.

* The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. Matt. xxv. 16.

† His hand the good man fastens to the skies,
And bids earth roll, nor feels her idle whirl.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

few days since, I was cut down like a flower, and my body lies withering in this comfortless bed; regardless of God, and inattentive to duty, I passed gaily along, and thought no storm would ever overcloud my head:—in a moment the unexpected tempest arose. I sunk and was lost. Go thy way and forget not thyself: remember that to-day thou hast life in thy power; to-morrow, perhaps, thou mayst lie a breathless corpse.* Estimate from thence the value, poor and small as it is, of all things beneath the sun,—and forget not that death and eternity are by an indissoluble band united.

"If thou darest to die without repentance, and unprepared to meet thy God and Judge, who can enough deplore thy misery, most wretched of all human beings! everlasting anguish, remorse, and punishment assuredly await thee.—But if bearing futurity in mind, thou art so blest as to be enabled to live in conformity to the gospel of thy God and Saviour, he will, according to his gracious promise, open the golden doors of perennial bliss for thee, whilst eternal delight, from the full river of God's inexhausted love, remains to crown thy faithful services.

"Immortal! be wise, remember judgment, and prepare to die."—

* To-morrow, I will better live,
Is not for man to say;
The morrow can no sureties give,
The wise make sure to-day.

Lost in the deep reflection, I was awakened from it by the intelligence of the approach of the funeral of my departed friend.

CHAP. II.

Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. Prov. xxvii. 1. *Defer not until death to be justified!* Eccl. xxviii. 22

O Death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions; unto the man that has nothing to vex him; and that hath prosperity in all things; yea, unto him that is yet able to receive meat. Eccles. xli. 1.

THE horses nodding their sable plumes, advanced with solemn pace ;* whilst the slow-moving wheels of the melancholy hearse, seemed to keep time with the deep-toned bell, expressive of the silent sorrow (now and then interrupted with a groan of distress) which reigned in the mournful coaches that followed.

They stop :—and ah, my friend, what is all this labour, and all this difficulty to drag thy body in its last narrow dwelling from the confinement of the hearse, and to bear it along the church-yard to its gloomy mansion

* Solemn and slow it moves unto the tomb,
While weighty sorrows nod on every plume.

DR. WATTS.

in the church! Ah, where is thy former activity—thy wonted sprightliness and vigour! Thou who didst tread over the threshold with such lively strength, and brushed away the dew of the morning with stout and nimble vivacity; have thy feet too forgotten to do their office? And must thy fellow-mortals toil beneath the load of thy clayed corpse, to bear thee from the sight and sense of the survivors?

O death, thou sovereign cure of human pride!* to what a state, impartial in thine attack, dost thou reduce as well the noblest and the fairest, the greatest and the best, as the meanest and most worthless of mankind! Though our friends be dear to us as a right eye; lovely as the bloom of the morning; powerful as the sceptred monarch of the East; thou not only degradest them from the elevated height, but renderest obnoxious to the view; and inaccessible to the tender embrace of the last lingering, faithful, unshaken adherent; let corruption cease to be vain; let rottenness, and dust, no longer swell in brief and borrowed arrogance.†

* Well might a Latin poet say,

. . . . . Mors sola fatetur
Quantula sunt hominum corpuscula. Juv.

† The following well-known lines may serve as a suitable comment and illustration of the above observations:

I dreamt that, buried with my fellow clay,
Close by a common beggar's side I lay;

But see the afflicting sight! Five tender children, each in an almost infant state, are led by weeping friends, in mournful procession, after the body of their departed father.

In a coach behind, waiting to complete the melancholy view, is an infant, three days old, brought into the world by its half-distracted mother, before its appointed time! Big sorrow and insupportable grief, hath hastened the throws and dire anguish of child-birth; and behold the little orphan, insensible of its misery, is offered to the baptismal font, while its father is consigned to the dreary tomb.*

Crouds of spectators from every part are attentive to the moving scene: on every face sits sympathetic sorrow; in every eye swells the generous tear of compassion and concern.

But a few days are past since a trembling messenger with breathless speed, urged my

> And as so mean an object shock'd my pride;
> Thus like a corpse of consequence I cried:
> Scoundrel, be gone! and henceforth touch me not;
> More manners learn, and at a distance rot.
> Scoundrel then, with an haughtier tone, cried he,
> Proud lump of earth, I scorn thy words and thee;
> Here all are equal, now thy case is mine,
> This is my rotting-place, and that is thine.

* This pathetic or affecting picture, taken from a real scene which the author was called upon to attend in his ministerial character, could not but excite the pity and provoke the tears of every spectator capable of feeling for the distressed situation of the mourning widow and her helpless orphans.

attendance at the sick bed of Negotio, on whose life, it was to be feared, the remorseless fever had made fatal inroads. I hastened without delay; and I found—but who can describe the afflicting misery? Confusion, anguish, and distress; weeping, lamentation, and woe; dismay and unutterable agony took up their residence in the dwelling of Negotio! Surprised in the midst of youth, and in the ardour of earthly pursuits by the awful and irresistible summons of death, the husband, the father, the man, lay racked with such thoughts as his condition might well be supposed to awaken.*

Unable to bear the shock, his wife, who long sleepless had watched by his couch, was thrown on the floor in an adjacent chamber, and her little infants were weeping around her, the more to be pitied, as unconscious of their misery, and wondering, with artless plaints, why their beloved mamma was thus sad and in tears! Near relations were tender in their best offices, while every heart was anticipating the wretched widow's distress.

When I sat down by his bed, and gently undrew the curtain, he looked—and shall I ever forget the earnest, anxious, speaking look? A tear dropt from his eye, he caught

* For a worldly minded man, in the midst of youth, riches, and pleasure, to be laid on a sick bed, and in the apprehension of his friends, as well as his own, to be near the borders of dissolution, is surely a very awful condition, and much to be dreaded by every thoughtless candidate for sensuality and dissipation.

my hand, he strove to speak, but his full heart forbade; and the organs of speech, deeply affected by his malady, were unfaithful to the trust of words which he gave them: we sat silent for some time, and with difficulty at length I perceived that he said, or wished to say, "I fear it is too late.—Pray for me; for Christ's sake, pray."

I endeavoured, as well as the affliction of my mind would permit me, to suggest every ground of hope, every motive of consolation: he squeezed my hand, and sighed.* "Little is to be done," he strove to say, "amidst all the distractions of a sick bed like mine: oh consider my wife, consider my poor little babes!" We said all which could be said; had scarce finished the usual prayers, and were preparing to mention the sacrament, when the visit was interrupted by the necessary attendance of the physician, whose departure the lawyer awaited, to settle his temporal affairs. Two more blisters were ordered to six he already had upon him; a drowsy sleepiness, dire prognostic of death, seized him; which hourly increasing, at length terminated in strong convul-

* Alas! what comfort or consolation can be administered to a wicked man in the views of death and eternity? Having lived a life of gaiety and pleasure, he can have no good scriptural ground to hope of meeting his latter end without fear and terror; death-bed repentance is at best precarious and uncertain; *one* was saved at the *last* hour, that none might despair; and *but* one, that none might presume. Luke xxiii 43.

sions, and the busy, active, sprightly Negotio died in his thirty-third year.*

Died! utterly unprepared and unprovided to leave this world; far less provided to enter into the next. His wordly concerns totally unsettled; his eternal concerns scarce ever thought of!

How much to be deplored is the fate of Negotio! and yet, alas, how much is it to be feared that many thousands are hourly splitting on the same rock with him.

He lived only for this world. Full of hope, and buoyant with life; death was not in all his thoughts; and a future state, when suggested to him, was considered as unworthy his present concern, because it was judged so distant. He thought not of the present span of existence, as of a short state of trial, an hour of weary pilgrimage; nor considered himself as an immortal being, speedily to give an account to the dread judge of mankind.† But deluded by the specious pretence of making necessary provision for his family, a duty he well knew

* Few years but yield us proofs of death's ambition
To cull his victims from the fairest fold,
And sheath his shafts in all the pride of life.

Dr. YOUNG.

† Did we esteem ourselves only as pilgrims and strangers here below, and as accountable beings who must ere long be judged according to our deeds, we should not be so much attached to things temporal, but think more seriously and frequently about those things which are eternal, according to the apostle Paul's exhortation. COLOS. iii. 2.

incumbent upon him, a duty he universally approved and applauded; he had no other view than to amass wealth, and provide a large fortune for his children; the comforts of which he promised himself to partake, and had formed many chimerical schemes of chariots and country retirements, of brilliant gaiety and envied splendor.*

Amidst these designs and pursuits, it might with too much truth be said of Negotio, that God was not in all his thoughts.—Indeed he regularly attended his church in the morning of the sabbath-day, and as regularly gave the afternoon to indulgence and dissipation. But while at the church, how listless was he to the prayers, now and then yawning out an unmeaning amen! for his heart was there where his treasure was placed.† The sermons had seldom much weight with him; he sometimes observed they were good; and when they touched on the subjects most pertaining to himself, he failed not to remark that the preacher was rather too severe.‡ Thus he went on; and in the eagerness of temporal pursuits, and the over-earnest desire to grow rich, had too far engaged his fortune, and not been successful according to his hopes; the reflec-

* Man appoints, but God often sees fit to disappoint.

† Mat. vi. 21.

‡ "A faithful minister cannot be too severe either in describing of sin, or dehorting from it."

tion on which harassed his mind while his industrious desires to obtain his ends and bless his family as much harassed his body, and brought on that fever, the sad issue of which we have just been describing.

Many and excellent were the qualifications of Negotio; his mind was tender and humane; tender affection dwelt on his heart towards the partner of his bed; and few parents knew a more sensible concern* for the fruit of their loins. No man would have been more ready or more active in the kind offices of friendship, if the multiplicity of his own avocations, had not rendered him incapable of being serviceable to others. He had no objection to the great truths of revelation;† and once in a sickness, from whence he was wonderfully raised, determined strictly to comply with them; but the world recovered its dominion as health again mantled on his cheek, and he returned to the pursuit which engaged his heart, with vigour redoubled, and activity augmented, in proportion to the time and opportunities he had lost.

How often, in the freedom of friendship, have I remonstrated, but remonstrated in

* A man may be, in the general tenor of his conduct, what the world calls a good husband and parent, and at the same time an utter stranger to piety and real religion.

† There is such a thing as believing and assenting to the truths of divine revelation, without a saving knowledge of, or a heart-felt concern about them; Reader, examine thyself.

vain ; till he saw me with shyness, and heard me with reluctance. Striving to justify himself, he usually concluded, when every argument failed, that he was young, and not likely soon to die ;* and would some time hence in retirement perform all those duties, and prepare for that futurity which he could not but acknowledge it was wise to foresee, and necessary to prepare for.†

Alas, my friend, how are thy vain hopes frustrated ! Cut off in the full blossom of all thy expectations, in the flower of life, thy earthly designs all abortive ; thy beloved wife and dear children left to struggle with loneliness, sorrow, and difficulties ; and thy soul, thy deathless soul, gone to meet the great God and Saviour ! that God whom it never desired to serve or love ; that Saviour whose mercies it never implored, except, perhaps, at the last sad moment ; and whose wonderful loving kindness had no charms to engage it to obedience, duty, and esteem.

And is the fate of Negotio peculiar ? Is he the only dreamer among the many thou-

* Prepare for death, young man, make no delay ;
The old *must* go, 'tis true, but younger *may*.

RURAL CHRISTIAN.

† Dr. Young beautifully observes,

Procrastination is the thief of time,
Year after year it steals, till all are fled,
And to the mercies of a moment, leaves
The vast concerns of an eternal scene.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

sands who walk the road of mortality? Would to Heaven he were; or would to Heaven his hapless example might be hung out as a beacon to warn others,* and prove effectual to awaken the children of this world from their sleep of death, thundering in their ears this solemn admonition:

"What art thou seeking, child of eternity, what art thou seeking with such restless assiduity! Look up and behold the heavens, where dwells the judge of the world! Formed by his hand, thou art placed awhile, short-lived probationer on this earth, and when he shall give the tremendous summons, thou must drop thy earthly body, and appear an immortal soul before his judgment seat! Eternity then awaits thee; as thou hast done good or evil, an eternity of blessedness or misery! Wilt thou then, in the folly of thy heart, neglect thy God; set up thy standard on earth; and think to fix thy dwelling here? when perhaps the breath of death may, the next moment, puff down all the phantastic castles raised by thy airy hopes! Wilt thou forfeit eternal joys for the transient things of earth? Wilt thou not be a man? act wisely; choose soberly; keep immortality in view; and live every day as one who knoweth that the next day, perchance, he may be obliged to lay aside

* Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.

his pilgrim's weeds ;* leave the inn of this uncertain life ; and enter on a state that can never be changed, and which shall never *never* have an end ?"

Whatsoever effect these reflections may have on others, may they, oh my God ! at least, be imprinted on my own heart ; never may I so live here, as to forget that I am to live for ever hereafter.

CHAP. III.

I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, From henceforth blessed are the dead who die in the Lord—Even so, saith the Spirit ; for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them. Rev xiv. 13.

SUCH was Negotio ; whose sad funeral obsequies performed, and whose little infant baptized, I was soon left alone to my solitary walk in the church-yard ; and being not much disposed to leave the solemn scene, I determined to continue a while longer, and indulge the pleasing sobriety of melancholy meditation.

How various, how innumerable are the shafts of Death ! They fly unerring from the quiver around us ; and on so thin a

* Make every day a critic on the past,
And live each hour as if it was your last.
RURAL CHRISTIAN.

thread hangs human life, to so many accidents and disasters is human life subject, that one would rather marvel that we continue to live, than that we should forget one moment that we are to die !* Nothing can be more beautiful, nervous, and expressive, than the following prayer used in our burial service :

" Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery ! He cometh up, and is cut down like a flower ; he fleeth as it were a shadow ; and never continueth in one stay.

" In the midst of life we are in death ; of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased ?

" Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.

" Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts : shut not thy merciful ears to our prayers ; but spare us, Lord most holy, O God most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, thou most worthy Judge eternal, suffer us not at our last hour, for any pains of death to fall from thee."

* Dr. Watts, reflecting on the innumerable channels through which the blood is conveyed over the whole animal system, breaks out in wonder and astonishment, saying,

Strange that an harp of thousand strings,
Should keep in tune so long.

Were we truly influenced by the doctrine and piety of this incomparable prayer, there is no doubt but we should make a better estimate of life and death than is usually done; we should set a less value on the one, and meet the other with more courage and resignation.

For what is man, and what is his life?—"Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live,"—short, indeed, suppose it to extend to the utmost length of human existence, even to fourscore years. But alas! too commonly, extent of life is but extent of sorrow; the time, though short, is yet full of misery.* The natural and acquired evils, the evils unavoidable, and the evils brought on ourselves by our own folly, vice, and imprudence are many, and great.

Our best happiness on earth is short, precarious, and uncertain; "he cometh up, and is cut down like a flower;" to-day we flourish in all the external accommodations of life, to-morrow the taste can no more relish its delicacies, nor the ear be delighted with the melody of the viol; no more the tongue can chant with pleasing harmony; the eyes open no more on sublunary scenes, while the useless lids are (it may be) closed by the trembling hand of our weeping friends.

As the shadow that departeth, that fleeth away, and its place is known no more, so we

* Job xiv. 1, 2.

vanish from the earth, and our memory is soon buried in total oblivion. To us little regard is paid any longer: still our associates, with their usual gaiety and ardour, pursue their several designs; still, as before, the business of life goes briskly on; the sun shines as brightly; the earth blooms as gaily;* the forests echo as sweetly with the music of the winged choristers; and all things wear their accustomed form: while our neglected clay is mouldering in dust, and trodden over by many a thoughtless, perhaps many a friendly foot.†

Many a friendly foot!—yes, even now, while I wander in the silence of the night, amidst these lonely receptacles of the dead, how many graves are around me, which contain the precious relics of neighbours and fellow-creatures, by myself consigned to their last earthly home!‡—wretched, wretched home! were not the soul secure of immor-

* The author here seems to have in view the sentiments of Mr. Pope, in a letter to Mr. Steele, where he thus expresses himself: "The morning after my exit the sun will rise as bright as ever; "the flowers smell as sweet, the plants spring as green, and the "world will proceed in its old course."

† ——————What is this world?
What but a spacious burial-field unwall'd,
The very turf on which we tread once liv'd.
BLAIR'S GRAVE.

‡ . . . . . The grave, that home of man,
Where dwells the multitude.
NIGHT THOUGHTS.

tality; were not the body lodged in the grave, as a faithful deposit, hereafter to be raised to life and glory,* by the Almighty Redeemer's trump.† That reflection sooths all the sorrow, and extracts all the poison from the dart of death!—What is that I read on yonder tomb—on which the passing moon reflects her full light, as she walks majestic through the skies, and makes her silver way through the dark and mantling clouds?"—"Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where isthy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but, thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.‡"—These were the words, which last hung on the lips, and at his desire are engraven on the tomb of Osiander, who died full of faith; a man whose death might well inspire the wish—"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his!"§

O Negotio! how unlike to thee was Osiander: how unlike in life, how unlike in death—though the same temporal concern, the same worldly occupations were common to either.

Happy in parents, who well knew the influence and importance of religious princi-

* Certum est in cineres corpus mortale reverti,
Sed tamen æternus non erit ille sopor.
MANT.

† 1 Cor. xv. 52. ‡ Cor. xv. 55-6-7. § Num. xxiii. 10.

ples, Osiander was early initiated and perfectly instructed in the school of piety: abundantly did he verify the truth of the wise man's observation; for conducted, when young, into the happy path of truth, he never departed from it.* His youth was amiably distinguished by the most conscientious and tender regard to his parents; a presage of his future felicity; and his whole demeanor was tempered with the most winning modesty and engaging respect.

Rare felicity in Osiander; he obtained a partner, formed with every qualification suitable to his own: it might well be said of them, so similar were their tempers, their desires, their pursuits, so much

> Like objects pleas'd them, and like objects pain'd,
> 'Twas but one soul that in two bodies reign'd.

No wonder then Osiander was a pattern, as of filial, so of conjugal affection. Peace and serenity ever welcomed him to his house, and true satisfaction departed not from his happy dwelling. Hence he found no cause to search abroad for the felicity which multitudes cannot find at home; nor dreamed of the tavern and the club, the places of merriment and diversion, to drown the cares he never knew, or to give the bliss he continually enjoyed.†

* Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. Prov. xxii, 6.

† An engaging picture of matrimonial happiness. Would to God there were more pleasing copies of it to be met with in the

Happy in so choice a companion, he was diligent to discharge, in the exactest degree, the parental duty towards the dear pledges of his love, wherewith their faithful embraces were blest. And hence, from their earliest youth, he took care to inspire them with every sentiment of true religion, and to bring them up in the faith and fear of that Almighty Father, a regard to whom, deeply rooted in the minds of children, is the most undoubted security of their regard to earthly parents.*

As the connections of Osiander necessarily rendered his family large, he was conscienciously exact in the discharge of his duty to his domestics and servants. "Every man," he was wont to say, "should esteem himself as a priest in his own family; and be therefore careful to instruct his dependants, as those of whom he must one day give a solemn account." And, "One reason," he would often say, "why men are generally so negligent of this important duty, is the sad example they set themselves,—an example which renders all precept ineffectual."† Hence he was diligent to maintain

present day; but, alas! how few is the number, and how seldom are they found!

* Children who fear not God, seldom regard man! this is a melancholy truth, and too often verified.

† Be not a man of *words*, but *deeds*,
Examples (precepts) far exceeds.

that prime pillar of domestic authority: he spoke by his life as well as his words; and never proposed a duty to his family which they did not see him practise himself.*

Family prayer was never omitted in his house. The sabbath-day was never mispent in triffling, visiting, and folly; much less in drunkenness and debauchery. Attended by as many of his family as was convenient, he himself led the way to his church, both morning and afternoon; while the evening of that blessed day was ever spent in catechising and instructing the younger, and in reading some useful discourse to the more advanced part of his household.†—Never abstaining from the hallowed table of the Lord, he was earnest always in pressing that important duty: and few who lived with him were long strangers to that heavenly banquet.

Thus exemplary at home, he was no less esteemed abroad: his punctuality, honesty, and worth, were universally commended; and though some of freer principles would sometimes be apt to sneer at his preciseness (as they termed it) yet no man maintained a more universal credit, pursued his temporal business with more becoming alacrity, or,

* Setting a good example is the best way to recommend and enforce good precepts.

† The method of spending the sabbath-day, cannot be too much inculcated or enforced on every master and mistress of a family; the neglect of it has been the ruin (it is greatly to be feared) of thousands of children, apprentices and servants.

by the blessing of God, flourished more in all desirable success.*

It pleased the sovereign Disposer of all things to give him a long foresight of his approaching dissolution, by means of a lingering and consumptive illness.

Shall I ever forget with what delight I heard him declare his high hopes, when, coming in by accident, I found him, with his beloved wife by his side; pale and emaciated, he sat in the chair of sickness, his hand tenderly clasping hers, and his eyes tenderly fixed upon her:—while she, with soft affection, strove to conceal her heart-felt distress, and the tear, unpermitted to come forth, stood trembling in her eye. "I was endeavouring, dear sir," said he, "to reconcile my life's loved companion to the stroke which shortly must separate us—separate for a while—separate, blessed be the Lord of life, only to meet that we may never more part.—But, alas, so frail is human nature, so weak is human faith, so attached are we to this poor crazy prison, that we cannot, we *cannot* be triumphant, we sink and grovel upon the earth even to the last."†

* Well might the Psalmist say, the blessing of the Lord is in the house of the righteous; blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways; happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. PSALM CXXVIII. 1, 2.

† Dr. Watts very justly sings,

Our dearest joys and nearest friends,
The partners of our blood,

Affection like yours, said I, so long tried, and so tender, cannot be supposed to part without pangs; nor should we think ourselves the worse Christians, because we feel the most sensibly as men.

"Oh no," said he, "I have never thought the finest feelings of humanity inconsistent with the most elevated degree of Christian virtue—but, methinks, when a pair have lived (as thanks be to God) my dearest wife and myself have constantly endeavoured to do—with a perpetual prospect to a future scene, and an earnest, though very imperfect labour, to walk worthy our high calling and hope—it should be matter of the noblest joy when the consummation of all our labours is at hand, when we are about to drop the veil of flesh, and to enter on the fruition of everlasting peace: surely this should dry up all our tears, and cause us to rejoice on behalf of the friend who is about—not to *die*, but to *live*; not to *lose* life, but to *enjoy* it.*—

How they divide our wav'ring minds,
And leave but half for God.

Oh! may we scorn these cloths of flesh,
These fetters and this load;
And long for ev'ning to undress,
That we may rest with God.

HYMN lxi. B. 2.

* We can never think too much upon this solemn and interesting truth:

When this our short and fleeting life is o'er,
We die to live; and live—to die no more.

For myself, I have no more doubt of immortality, nor (let me speak with due humiliation) of my own felicity with God, through Jesus Christ, than I have of my present existence. All nature, and the universal voice of the wise in every age proclaim the animating doctrine: but the Christian religion hath displayed it in such full light, so dispelled every cloud, so removed every scruple, that it would be the greatest indignity to the blessed author of it, either to doubt a future or eternal existence, or to doubt an eternal and happy one through faith in Jesus Christ.* Infidelity appears to me of all sins the most monstrous, after those various declarations which God hath made to support and confirm our faith."†

We were charmed at the divine warmth with which he uttered these words; his wife burst into a flood of tears; tears of mingled joy and sadness, who could refrain? We sat silent:—he at length went on.

"Yet let me not be thought presumptuous: I know the utter abhorrence of God to the least spark of self-dependence; I know the absolute contrariety of pride to the true interest of a fallen creature: I am nothing;

* It is the absolute declaration of God himself, "He that believeth shall be saved," and Christ has promised, as he liveth, they (who truly believe in him) shall live also.

† Unbelief robs the Christian too often of his spiritual comfort; but let him who professes to believe in Christ, take heed respecting the nature, ground, and fruits of his faith, that they are of the right kind, according to the rule of God's unerring word.

I have nothing: I can do nothing: to the glory of his free grace be all I have ever done, be all I ever hope for!* But there is such an exhaustless fund of unexampled mercy and love in the great Saviour of mankind, so wonderful are his doings, so passing all comprehension his tender regards for the children of men, that I dare not dispute his rich offers; that I dare not hesitate in the embracing his full promises.

"Oh, sir, I can say with the utmost sincerity, that the reflection on his past mercies is my sole and unspeakable comfort; and in his love I already taste something of the bliss I expect. Influenced by that love, and by a sincere (though almost weak) faith in him, I have laboured diligently to act in conformity to his will: and though conscious of a thousand and ten thousand infirmities, though in my best services utterly unprofitable, though in all, less than the least of his mercies, yet I have an unshaken confidence in his all-sufficient merits, and fully relying upon them, I commit my soul to him, with all the satisfaction and serenity of calm and well-grounded hope.†—He is a rock that can never fail us: the cross of Christ promiseth

* This will ever be the language of a true Christian, though not the sentiments of every nominal one.

† Oh! the comforts and consolations of an expiring believer in Jesus Christ, how solid, unspeakable, and encouraging! well might the psalmist David say, "the end of that man is peace."

PSALM XXXVII. 37.

the sinner every thing which repentance can presume to ask."*

Much more passed between us, some things far too tender to be committed to paper; and it will not be any wonder to the serious reader to be told, that a sickness of some weeks was borne by a man of such faith, with all the cheerful resignation and consummate patience which are peculiar to the true Christian.† Nothing would be more instructive, perhaps, than many of the discourses which he held with his friends, during the scene of trial. A few hours before he died, he took a solemn leave of his wife and children, to whom he had delivered at large his dying advice—and perfectly sensible of his approaching dissolution; some minutes before he expired he was heard to say, "O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory! the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law,—but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." And hav-

* Touch'd by the cross we live, or more than die;
That touch, with charm celestial, heals the soul
Diseas'd, drives pain from guilt, lights life in death,
Turns earth to heaven, to heavenly thrones transforms
The ghastly ruins of the mould'ring tomb.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

† It may well be said, religion has pleasures which none but the real Christian can enjoy; consolations which none but the real Christian can partake of, and a crown of glory promised to its followers after death, which none but the real Christian can have a title to, or wear. 2 Tim. iv. 8.

ing said this, he fell asleep, with a composure perfectly lovely, with a peace infinitely desirable.

CHAP. IV.

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. MAT. x. 29, &c.

Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in Me. JER. xlix. 11.

FEW passions are more strongly implanted in the human mind, than the love of our offspring; to be devoid of which, degrades the human far beneath the irrational creature; through every species of which the wonderful influence of parental affection is discernable. The wisdom of the great Creator is immediately obvious in this gracious provision for the helpless young; and it is certain that this powerful regard in the human species, may be rendered productive of the most excellent effects.

Too commonly, indeed, it is grossly abused, and the honourable claim of parental regard is made the pretence for an unworthy and mean attachment to the pursuits of the world, and the love of this life. Many men

cheat themselves under this specious delusion ; and while they conceive that the spring of their actions, and the cause of their singular attention to earthly desires, is the laudable purpose of providing for their families ;* they are, the mean while, but following the bent of their inclinations, and treading in a track which they would continue to tread, were they not influenced at all by the motive which they fancy engages them in it. Frequent experience hath manifested this ; but it was never seen more evidently, perhaps, than in the case of Avaro ; who lived only for his children, as he constantly avowed, and on that account denied himself every reasonable gratification ; when, as if it were to falsify those pretences, as well as to awaken him, if possible, to a more rational conduct, the Sovereign of heaven deprived him of his children in a short compass of time ; and lo, he remains the same grovelling earth-worm, though he hath none to share that inheritance, which he purchases at the price of his soul !

If any truth be fully revealed in the sacred oracles, if any hath the sanction of the soundest reason, it is the belief of a wise, good, and superintending Providence, of an universal Father, who tenderly watcheth over,

* A prudent desire and endeavour to make a suitable provision for our families, are laudable and praise-worthy ; but an over-anxious pursuit after temporal things is hurtful and unbecoming, particularly respecting those who profess to be Christians.

and graciously careth for the concerns of those beings whom himself hath created, and placed in their several stations upon earth ;* a truth of an aspect the most benign, and of an influence the most important to all the affairs of men : to forget and disregard which, leads to all the folly of self-seeking, all the madness of self-dependance, all the bitter anxiety of self-corroding care : to remember, and live under the constant persuasion of which, induces all the sweetness of a serene conscience, all the fortitude of a resigned soul, all the comfort of an unshaken hope.†

And to this, were we to judge by the rules of right reason, or religion, that parental affection which is so universal and amiable, must naturally bend every parent ; whom, if no other consideration were sufficient to persuade to the practice of religion, and to a dependance upon the Deity, the reflection of its infinite moment to their offspring, and of the unspeakable value of the divine favour, should powerfully incline thereto. For there is no patrimony like the divine protection, and no friendship so stable as the friendship of heaven. The former can never be exhausted, the latter will never fail or for-

* Matt. vi. 26.

† Well might our Saviour upbraid his disciples with unbelief of his providential care, by saying, "If God so clothe the grass o the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith!" MAT vi. 30.

sake us: no change of circumstances will change its fidelity; nay, much unlike the friendship of the world,* in the black day of adversity it will smile with the most sweetness and affection.

Our earthly scenes in behalf of our children, may prove unsuccessful, and be quickly blasted by the finger of disappointment; our labours may end in vexation, and all our attempts be insufficient to secure the fortune we may wish; or should we secure it, the patrimony we have gained, at the expense of so much care and anxiety (nay, perhaps at the high price even of felicity eternal) may be embezzled by the faithless gurdian; devoured by the litigious lawyer; or foolishly squandered away by the spendthrift heir; whom our industry has capacitated to sink into the foul sewers of idleness, vice, and sloth;† and deprived at once of the comforts of this life, and the hopes of a better, by

* Dr. Young expresses a similar opinion of the world's friendship, in the following lines:

Tir'd nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep!
He, like the world, his ready visit pays
Where fortune smiles; the wretched he forsakes.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

† Idleness, vice, and sloth, have been the ruin of thousands; therefore carefully to be avoided; particularly by young persons of both sexes: for an idle man is the devil's play-fellow; slothfulness bringeth a man to rags; while

Vice its own punishment will ever prove,
But virtue leads to blissful realms above.

RURAL CHRISTIAN.

supplying him with the means and opportunity to be iniquitous ; when perhaps without them he had been led to careful industry, to sobriety, and all the blessed fruits of a rational and prudent demeanour.

Let it not be concluded from hence that we would condemn that proper care for the subsistence of a family, which all nations have judged necessary and becoming. We mean only to decry that absurd, but too common practice, of living merely to lay up wealth for those who shall survive us ; without taking care to secure the favour of Providence, without looking at all to the great superintendant of human affairs, who laughs, with just contempt, at the spider-webs which men of this character so industriously weave. Without God in their lives, without hope in their death, they are unable calmly to lay their dying heads on their pillows,* or to commend with humble, but confident faith, their weeping widows and orphans to the heavenly Husband, and the everlasting Father.

Of these poor Negotio never thought, and therefore could derive no comfort to himself, could administer no comfort to his wife or his children, from the solid expectation of the fatherly care of Omnipotence.† This

* The wicked, in the views of dissolution, may hope for mercy at the hands of their offended Maker, but not on scriptural grounds; for the word of God assures us, without repentance there is no salvation. LUKE xiii 3.

† The offspring of wicked parents, if they continue in the roads of impiety and vice, may justly expect according to the express dec-

rendered his death dreadful: as the contrary view soothed every sorrow, and cheered every gloom before the face of the departing Osiander. He beheld his wife and his children with an eye of gladness, as the peculiar care of the Father of the fatherless, and the Husband of the widow: and to that care he consigned them with a cheerful hope and a peaceful acquiescence.* Negotio saw his family with an eye of distraction, as the prey of poverty, and the sport of an injurious world.

Unaccustomed to estimate worth by any other standard than that of earthly acquisitions, he considered them as unavoidably miserable: and leaving them unprovided with what the world calls good, he left them, as it seemed to him, destitute; and doomed to all the contempt of penury, and all the painful pity of distress.—Such was the issue of his anxious solicitude for temporal things. Oh, happy had it been for thee, Negotio, happy for thy family, if some portion of thy anxiety had been allotted to eternal concerns! then hadst thou died in the pleasing reflec-

ration of Jehovah, that the curse due to their parents will descend on them, for he has said, "he will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him and keep not his commandments." Exod. xx. 5.

* The real Christian, trusting in God as his heavenly father, friend and portion, may safely leave all he has in his hands, knowing he will safely keep that which is committed to him against that day, when he comes to judge the world by his Son Christ Jesus.

2 Tim. i. 12.

tion, that, not void of attention to thy great business on earth, thou wast going thyself to the kingdom of a Father, who watcheth with peculiar attention over the orphan and the widow, especially when consigned by the faithful parent to his secure protection: and who is equally able to save by many as by few; to bless where there is little, as where there is much; to bless with the most substantial blessings——competency, content, and a good conscience: which bestow those consolations, solid, secure and immoveable, that are denied frequently, or sought for in vain, by the distinguished favourites of exhorbitant wealth or exalted power.

Conscious hereof, Osiander, during his last sickness, was never deficient in pouring this healing balm into the bleeding heart of his life's loved companion, and softer friend.

"Widdowhood,"* he was often wont to say to her, "is doubtless a state of the deepest distress: left to weather out all the storms and tempests of a calamitous world, a poor dejected woman then most wants the tender support of the husband, whose loss those very wants more feelingly teach her. Not only every source of usual satisfaction is dried up; not only every allowable and life-cheering comfort is cut off; but the flood-

* See the fine speech of St. Chrisostom's mother, in the Christian's Magazine, vol. i. p. 54. Published for Newberry, in St. Paul's Church-yard.

gates are open to a tide of new troubles, unknown, unthought of before: which the memory of past felicities mournfully enhanceth; the retrospect of happiness once enjoyed, but now lost, adding double weight to the woe which springs up unwelcome in its place.

"Even when the affection hath not been of the most tender sort, the loss of a husband is severely felt; but where it hath been just and sincere, where long-tried fidelity hath much approved one to the other, there, as the parting becomes more afflictive, so the loss is more sensibly felt. Widowhood is then an iron furnace indeed.—But to catch the allusion, as the Son of God was seen in the furnace with the three faithful Israelites, preserving them unhurt from the rage of the flames;* so will he be present, with peculiar protection, and shield with his fatherly providence, the widow and her orphans. —'Leave thy fatherless children,' saith this kind God, 'I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me.'†

"This passage, I will freely confess to you, hath at all times given the greatest comfort to my mind, and at the same time encouraged me to a cheerful discharge of my duty, and to perfect dependance on God; conscious, that if I could by any means secure the fatherly care of Omnipotence for

* Dan. iii. 25. † Jer. xlix. 11.

you, and my dear children, I need not be anxious for aught besides; I have endeavoured to keep this point in view; and I can now commend you to that care, with the most joyful and heart-felt delight. For the Lord will never leave you nor forsake you: he is emphatically styled, 'the Father of the fatherless, and the Husband of the widow.'* A reflection which surely must make every tender parent, every affectionate husband solicitously careful to obtain God's blessing, if they really love their children; if they have a real regard for their wives and offspring; for the Lord God hath shewn, all through his blessed word, how near and dear to him are the interests of the widow and the orphan: he hath given peculiar laws, with much tenderness, respecting them: he hath made it one of the characteristic parts of true and undefiled religion, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction;† and as an emblem of his ever full and flowing mercy towards them, he sent his prophet to one of them in the day of her distress, and enriched her with a continual supply, while want and famine were reigning around: giving at once a proof and a significant token of his fatherly providence, and increasing mercies to the widow who trusteth in him.‡

"For, my dear love, permit me to say, though I have scarce any need to say it to

* Psal. lxviii. 5. † James i. 27. ‡ 2 Kings iv. 6.

you, that these rich promises to widows are not given indiscriminately and under no conditions: it may be very possible to languish in all the wretchedness of a widowed state, and yet to enjoy none of the distinguished care of heaven. St. Paul speaks of those who are widows indeed; which plainly implies that some in a state of widowhood may be far from the Divine notice. A widow indeed, according to him, 'is one who trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayer night and day;' one who is truly sensible of the afflictive hand of Providence upon her; who endeavours to receive with meekness, and to improve in resignation by the chastising stroke; who fixeth her soul's dependance upon the high and gracious providence of her God, and laboureth, with all the sincerity of faith, and fervour of prayer, to cast herself and all her concerns upon him, as knowing he careth for her.

And as thus trusting in God and continuing in prayer, the widow should be particularly grave, serious, and sober in all her behaviour, dress, and deportment: she should not forget that God hath been pleased to cut off, if I may so say, the ornament of her head, and the pride of her life; and therefore requireth a decent solemnity in all her carriage. If the loss happens to a woman in earlier life, she hath need of more peculiar watchfulness against all the attacks of carnal enemies;

and should be very cautious not to give the least room for that reproach, either of wantonness or calumny, which some are so apt to impute to widowhood in general.*

"And should she, my dear, be left in your care, with a family around her, oh how much anxiety attends that necessary, that important charge; that most tender duty which she oweth to them—I cannot, indeed, I cannot speak of this heavy burden: my heart is too full; and I have perfect satisfaction in your motherly love to my dear children.—But do not sink under the burden, for God is with you: he will bless your endeavours; he will support you in every difficulty.—'Leave thy fatherless children to me, I will preserve them alive,'† said he: alive,—that is, through grace, alive to the only valuable, the divine life; alive to himself! Oh! sweet and comfortable promise, let it always be your support, and rest perfectly confident, that while you exert your best, though feeble efforts, for your dear children, the father of the fatherless will more than second you: trust in him: continue in prayer to him for them and for yourself: and you will have a husband infinitely preferable to this poor perishing mortal who is about to leave you—and they, my beloved pretty orphans have a father.‡—

* Would to God there were no widows in our day, but such who answered the above description.

† Jer. xlix. 11. ‡ Psal. xxvii 10.

"Oh! thou gracious Father, preserve, protect, defend, both her and them—and when my weeping eyes shall be closed in death; when my supplicating tongue shall be silent in dust; when my solicitous heart shall cease to throb for them! Oh! be thou their never-failing, their heavenly husband, father, friend!—their God and portion in this life and in that which is to come.—Oh, may we meet to part no more—meet to praise and adore thy exceeding loving-kindness, through endless ages in glory!"*

Thus spoke Osiander: and happy that husband who thus, like him, can, in the views of death, pour the balm of divine consolation into the heart of his afflicted and lamenting partner.

CHAP. V.

Still frowns grim Death; Guilt points the tyrant's spear,
And whence all human guilt?—From Death forgot!
YOUNG.

WERE it possible to avoid the stroke, or to escape the victorious arms of death, they would have something to plead for their con-

* Thrice happy Chriſtians! who, when time is o'er,
Shall meet in realms of bliss, to part no more.
G. W.

duct, who shun with all their power, the solemn reflection! who make it the whole business of their lives to dissipate the important thought of that, which they must sooner or later meet with, and to which they are inevitably doomed.* But as no human power can arrest even for one moment, the fatal dart;† as every individual must pass through this black and lamentable flood; surely wisdom dictates a serious and frequent attention to so interesting a concern, and reason advises the most diligent survey of this dreadful evil; that we may learn to encounter it with holy courage, or at least to submit to it without reluctance. Death, viewed with an hasty and trembling eye, appears in formidable terror, as the cruel blaster of all human hopes and joys; but death viewed with the eye of faith, and contemplated with the coolness of rational deliberation, loses much of its terror, and is approached with no small degree of complacency and peace.‡

* For it is appointed unto all men once to die. Heb. ix 27.

† When death receives the dire command,
None can elude or stay his hand;
For when his dread commission's seal'd,
The youngest, healthiest, all must yield.
RURAL CHRISTIAN.

‡ Death and his image rising in the brain,
Bear faint resemblance, never are alike;
Fear shakes the pencil, fancy sours excess,
Dark ignorance is lavish of her shades,
And these, the formidable picture draw.
NIGHT THOUGHTS.

You tremble at the fear of death; come draw near, and let us see what that is, which thus alarms your quickest apprehensions. See in the most fearful garb, death is only the ransomer of frail mortals from the prison of a sinful, painful, and corrupted frame; their deliverer from a transitory, and vexatious world;* their introducer to an eternal and—oh that we could always add—a blessed state!—but there, *there* alas, is the dread. It is this which clothes death in his terrors, and gives all its sharpness to his sting.—Could we be assured, had we a scriptural and well-grounded presumption, that the departing soul should enter into a state of felicity, and be received into the bosom of its Saviour and its God; we should then universally lay down the load of mortality, not only without regret, but even with triumph.†

When then comes it to pass?—let us no longer lay the blame on death, for it is fairly exculpated—whence comes it to pass, that we dare to live, without treasuring up "this rational and well-grounded presumption," which the Christian religion so copiously

* ——— Death ends our woe
And puts a period to the ills of life.

DR. YOUNG.

† To meet death without cause to fear it, is the privilege only of a true believer in Jesus; well therefore, does an eminent writer say,

Believe, and look with triumph in the tomb.

DR. YOUNG.

supplies, and which we are called upon to treasure up by every motive of interest, of common sense, and of duty? if we neglect this, let us not pretend to quarrel with our fate, and to repine at the fearfulness of death; we ourselves give all his fearfulness to him, and from ourselves alone proceeds the cause of our bitterest disquietude. For God hath plainly declared to us the irreversible condition of our nature. Our death is no less certain than our existence.* He hath graciously provided a sovereign and infallible antidote against the fear of death, in the victorious resurrection of his dear son.† He hath informed us, that our bodies must return to dust; that all our possessions must be left behind; and that a state everlasting and unalterable awaits us—a state of endless bliss with him, or of misery with condemned spirits.‡

If then, my soul, deaf to his informations, and regardless of his mercies, thou shalt forget the condition of thy nature; pride thyself in the beauties of thy present body; boast thyself in the possessions of thy present state; neglect to secure an interest in

* Fix'd is the term to all the race on earth,
And such the hard condition of our birth;
No force can death resist, no flight can save,
All fall alike, the fearful and the brave.

POPE.

† 1 Cor. xv. 20. ‡ Mat. xxv. 46.

the Saviour, by faith unfeigned, and obedience unreserved—thine, and thine eternally will be the just condemnation: nor canst thou wonder, that the stroke of death, in this view, is horrible to thy apprehension; for it will separate thee from all thou holdest dear, and convey thee to a region, dolorous and unwelcome, where thou hast not treasure, and canst not have either hope or love. But remember, in this case, death deserves no blame; for it is not death which is terrible in itself; it is man, foolish man, who renders it so, by his inexcusable neglect.*

It is from hence arises the fear of death; from estimating too highly the things of this life, and from forgetting the mutable condition annexed to every mortal blessing. Hence sprung all the mistakes, and all the miseries of the young, the lovely Misella; and all the piercing pangs, which tore her wretched parents' hearts.

Misella was blest, by the great giver of all good gifts, with a frame peculiarly elegant and pleasing. Softness and sweetness dwelt in her countenance; the down of the swan was rivalled by her skin; her shape was faultless, her limbs were finished with the most beautiful symetry, and her voice was musical as the harmony of the lute. She was taught from the cradle to value this fine

* Death will be to the real Christian, the end of all his earthly troubles, and the beginning of his heavenly joys, while to the wicked and impenitent, it will prove the end of all their hopes, and the beginning of their eternal desperation.

person; and her fond and overweening parents fed the soothing vanity with every food which their dotage could supply.*

Her education was perfectly polite, adapted to set off the graces of her frame, little calculated to expand or improve the more valuable beauties of her mind. Her taste for dress was remarkably elegant, her manner of dancing particularly genteel: she excelled much at cards, and few were happier in devising schemes, and engaging parties of pleasure. As her voice was charming in itself, so was it improved by art, and aided by the soft touches of the guitar, which she handled with inimitable grace; preferring it to all other instruments, as the attitude of playing upon it, is most advantageous for the display of a fair lady's gentility.

She very early gave her parents convincing proof of the mistake they had made in her education, and of their unhappiness in neglecting to inculcate the principles of religious duty and conscientious virtue. For in her seventeenth year, she married a young officer, of inferior rank, and no fortune, with the entire disapprobation of her parents; nay, and in direct contradiction to their commands. The gaiety of his dress, and the charms of his person, captivated her heart; and unaccustomed to reason and think, she

* The very means and the best method they could have taken, or the devil himself could have devised, to make their child a curse to them, and bring down their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

broke through every obligation to gratify her romantic passion.*

The blind and excessive fondness of her parents soon induced them to pass over this breach of duty, and to welcome their darling daughter and her husband to their affectionate arms. Accustomed from her cradle to a life of dissipation and pleasure, now that she was free from all parental restraint, she indulged the mad propensity with still greater ardour.† From one public place to another, during the summer, she led her passive husband; during the winter they lived in all the fatiguing gaiety of town diversions.

A child was the issue of their marriage; but as the daughter had been before, so now the mother was swallowed up in the woman of pleasure: she sent the little infant to her parents, regardless of its welfare, if she could but pursue her beloved gratifications. The case was the same with a second produce of their conjugal endearments. She looked upon child-bearing as a severe tax paid by the fair sex, and as an obstacle in

* Young women can never be too cautious respecting the men they make choice of, as partners for life, for their future happiness depends on it. What a melancholy reflection it is, that numbers in the present day, marry in haste, and repent at leisure, when it is too late.

† The education of children is truly an important task, and cannot be too carefully attended to by parents in general; for it is an observation confirmed by experience:

Children like tender osiers take the bow,
And as they first are fashion'd always grow.

their way to the possession of those delights, which alone have worth and relish in the esteem of a woman of fashion.*

My reader will not be amazed if a life of this kind produced no small difficulties in their circumstances. Her parents, though not very affluent, readily contributed all they could: and ah! too fond—fed scantily and dreast meanly, that their daughter might be clad in scarlet, and feast in delicay.† It happened that her husband in the third year of their marriage, was called abroad to attend his regiment. Pleasure was her passion; she felt therefore little regret at parting with him. Nor did she live, during his absence, like the widowed wife, and separated friend. She followed her diversions with redoubled assiduity; was the life of the ball, the delight of the men, the queen of joy.

But her constitution, tender and delicate, was unequal to the toil; her nocturnal reveries extinguished the rose in her cheek; her laborious life of pleasure brought on a consumption. Besides this, with declining health, her character became equivocal; (though it is agreed by all, she was never really *criminal*, in the sense that word is commonly used:) but the want of *appearances* is often as fatal

* Alas! how many Misellas, such thoughtless and imprudent married women, do we see daily: may the Lord of his infinite mercy lessen the number, by teaching them wisdom from above.

† If ever parents were blinded by affection, to the true interests of their children, surely these were among the number.

to reputation, as even the want of *virtue* itself.* To exhilarate her spirits, she had frequent recourse to improper means; to renovate her beauty, she had constant recourse to destructive arts.

Her parents, who seldom saw her,—saw her only for a few passing moments, which she could sometimes, though very rarely, steal from her engagements, to dedicate to the children of her bowels, and to the parents, whose only joy, she knew, was in her company.—Her parents hearing of her declining state intreated, earnestly and with tears intreated her to come to them, and to use all proper means for the recovery of her health. She sent them no reply; but using what appeared to her the necessary methods, yet prosecuting at the same time, her usual course of pleasure, she appeared a dead body, almost in the bright scenes of revelry and joy,—and at length was seized with an acute disorder, which in two days carried her off, in a strange place; at a distance from her friends! and without a relation to close her eyes!†

* It is a well-known proverb, "Give a dog an ill name, and hang him;" and so it is, "If you are not a thief, don't look thief-like:" the meaning of which is, the loss of reputation, however, it may be founded only on suspicion, is truly as hurtful and disadvantageous as though there was real sufficient ground for it: and if we are not candidates for vice and votaries of dissipation, we should not associate with those who are; for a man is generally known by his company.

† Hapless Misella! may surviving fair ones,
By thy example learn to shun thy fate;
How wretched is the woman wise too late.

G. BARNWELL.

A messenger was instantly dispatched to her parents; a tender parent only can guess their anguish. The afflicted father flew down to the place of her death with all possible speed; and when he entered the house, where lay the dead body of his child, his only child, the child of his soul,—"Oh give me my daughter," he cried out, "let me but see her dear face, though she is dead; lead me, lead me to my child, shew a poor old man the sad remains of all his hopes and wishes."—Dumb grief prevailed:—the mistress of the house conducted him to the door of the room, where lay the pale and lifeless corpse.

He threw himself with unutterable distress, on the bed, beside his daughter, and bedewing her clay-cold face with tears, lay for some time in all the agony of silent sorrow! "Are we thus to meet?"—At length he burst out thus:—"Oh my Kitty, my child, my daughter, are those dear lips ever sealed in silence?—Ah, all pale and wan!—and will those eyes which used to look upon me with such joy, never, *never* open more?—One word, my child, oh if it were but *one* word!—Ah, cruel and unkind—that I might not be allowed to watch thee in thy sickness? hadst thou permitted me to attend, thy dear life had been saved.

"Alas, why do I rave? she hears me not—pale, indeed; but lovely as ever: Ah, soft and precious hand, marble in coldness.

—I will never let thee go.—Oh my Kitty, my child, my only beloved !—I am undone, for thou art no more ; oh that I had died with thee ;* would to God I might die this moment !—My Kitty, my child, my daughter, my all !"—Here again he burst into an agony of tears, and betrayed all the signs of the most excrutiating grief.

But it is unnecessary to dwell longer on this part of our tale ; it will be more proper to make some remarks upon it : these, however, together with the very different character of Pulcheria, must engage the next chapter.

CHAP. VI.

Take compassion on the rising age ;
In them redeem your errors manifold ;
And by due discipline and nurture sage,
In Virtue's love betimes your docile sons engage.
WEST'S POEM ON EDUCATION.

HOW great a blessing is early instruction !—Misella never heard the sweetly persuasive lectures of wisdom ; she was never called to attend to the winning voice of re-

* Extravagant or excessive grief, is finely depicted in the lamentations of David, the man after God's own heart, over the corpse of his son Absalom, as recorded in the 18th chapter of the 2d book of Samuel.

ligion and truth ; and therefore, left to the blind conduct of impetuous passions, she was driven along, " to every wave a scorn ;" she foundered and was lost !—We do not pretend to say, that early instruction and virtue are so inseparably connected as never to be divided : we do not say, that all who enjoy this advantage must go right ; that all who enjoy it not, must infallibly go wrong. This would be to contradict palpable experience. But we are bold to advance, that there is the chance of ten thousand to one, in favour of the former ; so is there the same chance, it is feared, against the latter !*— How alarming a reflection to parents !

Had Misella, from her early infancy been trained up in the knowledge of herself, her God, and her duty ; had she been carefully led to a true estimate of her corruptible frame ; not deceived into a wrong opinion of it, from poisonous flattery, and delusive adulation : had she been taught, that every good gift comes from God, and consequently can be no proper subject of human vanity ; had she been taught, that God expects a proper return, and reasonable service for the bounty he shews ; that our present state is a state of trial, that we are pilgrims and probationers of a day ; and must necessarily in a short time remove our tent from this world, and

* The wisest man declares, if you train up a child in the way he should go, when he is old, he will not depart from it. PROV. xxii. 6.

live—live everlastingly in another, happy or wretched, as we have performed our duty in this :*—Had these lessons of useful import been early and steadfastly imprinted on her mind; most probably the miserable parent had not wept in such anguish, over his more miserable daughter: most probably her hands might have closed, with filial piety and tenderness, his aged eyes.

But—ah me!—how constantly do we behold these important lessons neglected!—while fond and over-weaning parents, like those of Misella, cheat their little ones, even from infancy, into false opinions of themselves! The mistakes so frequent and so fatal, in the education of children, would almost lead one to approve the Lacedemonian policy, which allowed not to parents the liberty of educating their own children, but committed this most necessary business to the care of the state. And, from an accurate observation of the conduct of parents, how few have yet fallen within the observation of the writer of these lines, who were tolerably capacitated for the task!—who had prudence and fortitude enough to conquer parental prejudices; and to stand superior to the soft foibles of melting affection.

With respect to the gentler sex, it is an evil too notorious to be denied, that ere the pretty innocents can lisp their pleasing tales,

* Mat. xxv. 46.

they are initiated into the school of pride and shew; taught to reverence dress even to superstition, as the glare of alluring finery!—The mind thus early vitiated, strongly retains the taste;* vanity and modish folly, engross the whole attention, and ruin half, or render trifling and insipid, unwary thousands in the female world. For it is a fact, I apprehend, scarcely to be controverted, that in the lower orders of life, more women are seduced into prostitution, through their love of dress, than through their love of vice: and in the higher, we know, to what lengths an attachment to this deep-rooted foible is carried.

With such principles, strongly impressed, how can we expect to find in the fair one, the endearing and sensible companion, replete, as Milton phrases it,—with all good, wherein consists

Woman's domestic honour, and chief praise.

How can we expect it—while, as he goes on, they are—

Bred only and completed to the taste
Of lustful appetite, to dance and sing,
To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye!†

Let it not be said, that the writer is severe: he would only wish to hold out a friendly

* Hence let parents and tutors be careful
In *virtue's* path to lead the infant mind:
For as the bough is bent, the tree's inclin'd.

† Paradise Lost, b. xi. l. 616.

warning against an evil, destructive to the tender and affectionate parent: upon whom it principally lies to give to female elegance its greatest merit: while he intreats the inconsiderate and the fond, attentively to contemplate the half-distracted father weeping over the clay-cold corpse of his darling Misella.

And wouldst thou, oh reader, wish thy beloved offspring a better fate; wouldst thou wish never to share in the horrors of so sad a distress?—then let it be thy chief study early and diligently to inform with true wisdom, the young, the waxen mind; attentive to the poet's remark:

> Children like tender osiers take the bow,
> And as they first are fashion'd, always grow.

Sensible of this capital truth, the parents of the amiable Pulcheria omitted no opportunity to cultivate her mind, and early to lead her into the pure and peaceful paths of sacred wisdom. She was not inferior in person to Misella; but in conduct how superior! —in death how different!* As I have not had the happiness to converse with many, from whom I have reaped greater improvement, or received more delight; as I have never attended a death-bed, with more profit and edification, than that of the ever-valued Pulcheria; it hath frequently made me curious

* Live to the Lord, that thou may'st die so too:
To live and die, is all we have to do.

to learn from her parents the method they pursued in her education.—And one day sitting with her excellent father, I took the liberty to hint my desire.

"I know, sir, (said I) you are above the vulgar prejudices; and have so just a sense of the divine wisdom and goodness, in removing your daughter from this state of probation to a realm of glory, that the subject is rather pleasing than painful to you. You know my high opinion of her virtues; tell me what particular steps you took, in her early days, to lay the foundation of that noble structure, which she reared?" "You judge rightly, sir," said the good old man; "it is pleasing to me to think as well as to talk of my valuable daughter, whom I reflect upon with the most heart-felt complacence, as having soon ran her complete circle of virtues here;* as having speedily finished her course, and entered so early on her everlasting reward.

"Praised be God for giving me such a child; praised be God, for placing before me such an example. Forgive the involuntary tear—I cannot on this occasion withhold it; the remembrance of my dear angel so

* The speaker perhaps had the following celebrated lines of Waller in his view:

Circles are prais'd, not that abound
In largeness, but th' exactly round;
So life we praise, that doth excel
Not in much time, but acting *well*,

affects and ravishes me: oh, when will the hour come, that I shall once more see her—once more meet her, for ever to enjoy her lovely converse—meet her—Dear sir, excuse me, the pleasing hope overpowers me; excuse the parent; excuse the man."—We sat silent a few minutes; some natural tears we mutually dropt—but wiped them soon; when my worthy friend proceeded. "I will satisfy your desire: I did indeed lay down some few rules, respecting the education of my child, and they were invariably regarded: I will tell you the most material of them. Attribute it to the weakness of an old man's memory, if I am not altogether so perfect in them as I wish.

"In care, reproof, correction, and encouragement, my wife and myself (as all parents should) resolved to act, and ever acted in perfect concert.*—We early taught our child implicit submission to ourselves; assured, that otherwise we should be able to teach her nothing. It was our care to remove all bad examples, as far as possible from her sight; and in consequence to be cautious in our choice of domestics.†—We endeavoured always, to understand ourselves, what we wished our child to understand; to be

* *Mothers* are often said to spoil children by indulgence, but *both* parents should mutually unite, and determine not to spare the rod and spoil the child.

† Children are often spoiled by being left to converse and be too familiar with servants.

ourselves, what we would have her be; to do ourselves, what we would have her practice; as knowing that parents are the original models, upon which children form their tempers and behaviour.*

"We laboured gradually and pleasingly, to infuse into her mind the clearest and most affecting notions of God; his universal presence; almighty power; his goodness, truth, and overruling providence; his regard to pious men, and attention to their prayers.† These things we imprinted upon her tender spirit, and fixed them by those striking examples,‡ wherewith the sacred writings abound.—We took care, that she should frequently hear conversations upon serious and spiritual subjects, to which she used to attend as matters of curiosity; and from which she caught much of a religious and proper spirit. Few people are sensible of the advantage derived to children from suitable and serious conversation.§

* Children may generally be said to follow example, rather than precept.

† As the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, parents therefore should be careful to inculcate that fear in their children betimes.

‡ Such particularly as those of Noah, Abraham, Joseph, &c. the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea; the miracles in the wilderness; the deliverance of Daniel and of the three Israelites from the furnace.—The miracles of Christ; the Apostles, &c.

§ Alas! how trifling and improper, is the conversation of too many parents before their children, and how little calculated to inform their judgments, or regulate their conduct.

"It was our most earnest study, early to shew her the vanity of the world: the frailty of the body; the corruption of our fallen nature, the dignity and infinite worth of the immortal soul;* and to make her acquainted, as she was capable, with what God hath done for that soul; and to set before her all the riches and mercy of redemption.—We constantly inculcated upon her, this important truth, that she was not created merely to live here below, but in the glorious and eternal world above; and that she was placed here only to have her virtue tried and exercised,† that she might be made fit to live for ever in heaven.—'And therefore, my dear, you see (I used to observe) that there can be no room for pride in your person, or vanity in any external endowments, for your body is the workmanship of the great God; you cannot make one hair of your head white or black: and your body is but the prison, if I may so say, of your nobler part, which is immortal, and must share in the rewards or punishments of futurity, while your body will moulder in corruption, and become so odious, that your nearest and dearest friends cannot approach it.‡

* Mat xvi. 26.

† The present life is justly stiled a state of trial and probation; for the scriptures of divine truth frequently represent it as a warfare, and the troubles and afflictions we meet with, as so many trials of our faith, patience, and resignation. 2 Tim. i. 3, 4. 1 Pet. i. 7.

‡ If a beautiful, proud, and gay woman, would but seriously reflect on what a loathesome carcass she must ere long become, in

'Remember you have received all you are and all you have from God; therefore never presume to assign any merit to yourself; nor estimate any thing here below, at too high a rate: for this life you perceive is only a state of trial, and of consequence unworthy our too fond attachment. Heaven is your home; God is your father; and eternity is your life.' But pardon me, dear sir, I digress from my rules, and like an old man indeed, fall into downright prating.—Satisfied that all religion stands or falls with the breach of the sabbath, we habituated our dear child from her infancy, to sanctify that sacred day: to esteem highly the word of God; to reverence his ordinances, and to respect his ministers. And we were especially careful, that with all religious instruction (you know my own sentiments) she should imbibe a spirit of universal candour, goodness, and charity; as far from the wildness of enthusiasm, as from the narrowness of superstition and bigotry.

"We always addressed her understanding, and treated her as a rational* creature: we encouraged her enquiries, and used her betimes to think and to reason. We repre-

the silent grave, amidst worms, rottenness, and corruption, it would tend to mortify her pride, lessen her vanity, and teach her to be humble.

* We suppose, that by this remark the gentleman means to express his disapprobation of the simple method, in which many ignorant nurses (we would not say parents) treat children; as if they imagined them mere little animals, unconcerned with rationality.

sented vice in its true colours,* which are the most odious, and virtue in her proper form of beauty and loveliness.—We were especially diligent to give her a deep sense of truth and integrity ; and an abhorrence of all manner of falsehood, fraud, craft, subterfuge, and dissimulation, as base, dishonourable, and highly displeasing to the Almighty. Assured that we could not cherish veracity too much, we never were severe for any fault she ingenuously acknowledged ; but always while we strove to convince her of the wrong she had done, we honoured and commended her for the truth she had spoken.†

" Convinced of the countless evils which attend the female sex from their passion for dress and shew, we endeavoured all in our power to give her a low, that is, a true opinion of these things ; and though she always wore such apparel in her younger days as became her rank and station, yet we never deceived her into a wrong opinion of herself by gaudy, external ornaments—If we had, how could we have excused ourselves ?‡—

* Well might Pope say,

Vice to be hated, need but to be seen.

† It is an old proverb, and a just one,

Truth may be blam'd, but can't be sham'd.

‡ Parents are much to blame to encourage, or countenance their children in following the fashions of the times too scrupulously ; it naturally tends to promote pride and vanity in the young and tender breast.

Whenever we observed any thing tending to a bold, pert, or forward behaviour, (though, blessed be God, there was even from her infancy little appearance of this) it was checked immediately: for we knew it might grow up into a flippant pertness, or a dissolute insolence.

"From many examples before us, we saw the misfortune of suffering children to be men and women too soon; for children are by no means fit to govern themselves, or to direct others:—we avoided this dangerous rock. Soon as she was able to apply to the business of instruction, we inured her to diligence and close application, yet not so close as to deprive her of such amusements and exercises as were proper to preserve cheerfulness, vivacity, and health.* And you, who knew her (good sir) and her many accomplishments, will do me the justice to believe, that we permitted her not to want any advantages of increasing in wisdom and knowledge, and that she did not abuse those advantages.

"I had forgot to observe, that we taught her most assiduously the duty of humanity; for we taught her to reverence the feelings of nature even in the lowest orders of creatures; we suffered her not to treat any with contempt, but to shew all possible acts of tenderness and charity, cherishing with all

* This is a good rule for parents to act by in general, towards their children, respecting their employments and diversions.

our might a spirit of modesty and gentleness, of benevolence and compassion, even to insects and animals, always discountenancing that wanton cruelty which some children shew as an early proof of a barbarous, wicked, and inhuman disposition.*

"And the fruits were equal to our labours —the lovely plant well repaid all our care and tendance."

To shew that this was not merely the remark of parental partiality, let us proceed to take a view, in our next chapter of the amiable Pulcheria in her life and death.

CHAP. VII.

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. PROV. xxxi. 30.

OUR obligations are truly great to those parents who carefully train up their children in the paths of wisdom, piety, and virtue; that they may be enabled to discharge every social duty with propriety.† And as so much of the comfort and peace of human

* See advice to a daughter.

† Children can never be sufficiently sensible of the obligations they lie under to their parents, for their care, protection, and education, till they become parents themselves.

life depend upon the fair sex, we are doubly indebted to those who early inform their tender minds, and deliver into the hands of the husband, not only the lovely mistress, but the endearing companion, and heart-approved friend. This was the constant and successful endeavour of the parents of Pulcheria; some of whose rules in the education of their child, were delivered in the foregoing chapter.

An education so wise and rational, could scarce be supposed to have failed of the desired effect. The modesty, understanding, and elegance of Pulcheria were generally observed, and the charms of her person, though of the first rate, were always eclipsed by the superiour beauties of her mind. She was sensible, but not assuming; humble, but not mean; familiar, but not loquacious; religious, but not gloomy.* The tenderness and delicacy of her sentiments peculiarly recommended her, and that sweet temper, which never suffered her to indulge the malevolence of censure, rendered her the object of universal esteem. I speak not of her accidental acquirements, her skill in musick,

* This reminds me of the character of Marcia, in the tragedy of Cato:

> Though she is fair, oh how divinely fair!
> But then the lovely maid improves her charms
> With inward greatness, unaffected wisdom,
> And sanctity of manners.
>
> ADDISON.

her taste for painting, &c. nor of her domestic knowledge: suffice it to say, she was well accomplished in these, and in every improvement which her parents could supply, or she herself could make.

The happy Benvolio, with the perfect approbation of her parents, received this rich treasure to his embraces, and called the lovely Pulcheria his, in her twenty-first year. He was the object of her choice, and his acknowledged worth well justified her heart's attachment to him. The fruits of her parents' care were now abundantly manifested; Benvolio thought—and justly thought—his lot peculiarly blessed, in a wife of so refined and happy a disposition. The felicity was consummate, as the strongest and most undissembled affection can produce. Their pleasures were mutual; and of separate satisfactions,—happy pair!—they had not the least idea.*

Her servants could never be lavish enough in her praises; for she treated them always with the most amiable humanity: "she considered them (she used to say) as fellow-creatures, placed indeed in an inferior sta-

* Happy they! the happiest of their kind,
Whom gentler stars unite, and in one fate
Their hearts, their fortunes, and their beings blend.
'Tis not the coarser tie of human laws,
Unnatural oft, and foreign to the mind,
That binds their peace; but harmony itself
Attuning all their passions into love.

THOMSON'S SEASONS.

tion ; but not on that account the less acceptable in the sight of God. Nay, if we remembered (she would observe) who it was that for our sakes took upon him the form of a servant, we should certainly treat our domestics with becoming gentleness. Besides, she would go on, it appears to me an office of common humanity, to render a state of servitude and dependance as light and pleasing as possible : for while we by the bounty of Heaven, enjoy such superior blessings, shall we not, in gratitude, do all in our power to bless others who are less favoured by Providence ?* I esteem my servants as a kind of meaner, humbler friends : and though I would on no account make myself too familiar with them, or listen either to their flattery or their tales ; yet I never would be deficient in alleviating their inconveniences, and promoting their real happiness."†

Acting upon these principles, she was the darling of her domestics ; they beheld her with a degree of veneration. She was so happy as seldom to find cause to change ; and she never entertained her friends with tedious tales of the ill behaviour and errors of her

* However different our stations in life may be, we are all of the same blood ; and therefore have no reason to be proud of ourselves, or to lord it over those who are below us ; but to be humble, thankful, and benevolent.

† Good masters often make good servants : would to God, every master and mistress properly considered this, and adopted the sentiments and conduct of Benvolio and Pulcheria for their own.

servants.* I should observe, that she was careful to see them well instructed in their duty, and for that purpose she not only supplied them with proper books, but saw that they read them, while her beloved partner omitted no opportunity to assist in this necessary service.

Conscious of the high obligation upon all to observe the Sabbath, she strictly devoted that day to religion. She took care that such of her family as could possibly be spared, should always attend with her at the morning and evening service of the parish church. This she esteemed an indispensable duty ;† and never allowed herself to ramble from church to church, as was the case with some ladies of her acquaintance, in the neighbourhood, whose practice she constantly disapproved. "I owe this duty," she used to say, "to my family, to my neighbours, to my minister : and I cannot tell what evil may arise from a different example."

The evening of the Sabbath was always spent in religious exercises ; and she never would think of seeing company on that day. Routs on Sundays were monsters in her apprehension. "I can excuse," she would

* A practice too common with many in the present day, but highly censurable and imprudent.

† How great the pity ! that so many persons in the superiour walks of life, content themselves with only going to church on Sundays, without suitably attending to, and constantly practising what they hear preached ; hearing the gospel should always be accompanied with a life regulated by its prospects.

often observe, "those in the lower stations of life who have no other day of leisure but the Sabbath, and who perhaps are pent up in narrow shops all the rest of the week, if they dedicate some part of the day to recreation :* but for us, who have the enjoyment of all the week, surely it is inexcusable to devote this sacred day to our pleasures.—Shall not the great giver of all, receive a tribute of some small portion of our time ?"

But were I to dwell upon all the excellencies of her life and conduct, the limits prescribed me in this paper would soon be exceeded. I shall omit, therefore, any account of the benevolent charity which she exercised so largely (insomuch that never a child of distress went with a heavy heart and unrelieved from her presence)—while I hasten to give some account of her death. Her constitution was delicate ; after the birth of the second beloved infant which she brought her Benvolio (her first died early, and gave an opportunity for the display of the most exemplary resignation) she caught a cold which was accompanied with unhappy circumstances ; and though she recovered in some measure, yet the consequence was an hasty decay.

* This sentiment is not agreeable to the fourth command, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy," and therefore should not be adopted by a follower of Christ, be his station in the world what it may.

It is not easy to conceive the anguish of her parents and her husband upon so melancholy an occasion; upon a discovery that all the efforts of art, and all the powers of medicine were in vain; while her patience and resignation obliged them to refrain from every word of repining,* though it tended to increase their sorrow, by enhancing their esteem for her. Happy as I was in her friendship, it was my custom often to visit her during her long and trying illness; but I shall not easily forget an interview at the close of it, which I must confess wholly unmanned me, while it taught me the deepest humility.

I found her seated in the chair of sickness, in her bed-chamber, with her little infant lying in her lap, over which she hung with such a look of maternal fondness and anxiety, as I yet never saw, and which no painting could express! Soon as I advanced, she lifted up her eyes, in which stood the big and affectionate drops; while death seemed to sit upon her countenance, wan, yet not void of that placid sweetness, which ever dwelt upon it.

"I was indulging, sir," said she, "and I hope not improperly, some natural affection, and taking, perhaps,—my last leave of my poor little babe, who holds my heart

* We cannot but feel for and sympathize with those whom we love, when they are in pain and sorrow; but it is inconsistent for us as Christians to murmur or repine, being assured what God does either respecting us or ours, is right and best.

too fast—(false and weak heart as it is) rather too fast bound to this transitory scene!—Pretty innocent! see how it smiles on its weeping mother; unconscious yet of the bitterness of grief, and the sadness of tears. Sweet babe! I must leave thee: the Father of heaven thinks fit, and his will be done. But oh, the parent, dear sir, the parent will feel:—surely this will not be deemed a deficiency in humble resignation."* I observed that Christianity by no means opposes humanity; and that grace doth not destroy, it only regulates and refines our affections.

"My soul," she went on, "thankfully acquiesces in all the divine disposals, and I am satisfied, that whatever a God of love and wisdom ordains, must be best for his creatures. But when I look upon this dear innocent; when I consider the various evils of the world, and the prevalence of our corrupt passions: when I consider the peculiar inconveniences of our sex, if deprived of maternal care and instruction, my heart throbs with sensible anxiety—and I wish—O Father of love, pity and pardon me!—Must I, ah, must I leave this sweet harmless creature to all the trials and difficulties of life!—Oh my pretty babe, I must leave thee; but I shall intrust thee (and in that let me take comfort) intrust thee to a tender father, and to the protection of a Saviour and

* Christians are not stoics, they cannot but feel, though they should not fall under their troubles and afflictions.

a God, who careth for his little ones. Blessed Saviour"—She was here overpowered by the strength of her affection : and falling into a fainting fit, from which we almost apprehended she would never recover, her husband and her parents were instantly called up ; every effort was used to restore her ; though grief suffered no one present to utter a syllable. The scene was the most profoundly awful I ever beheld.

At length she came to herself ; and the first object she saw was her trembling mother bathed in tears, and holding her clay-cold hand ; on the other side stood her father ; at her feet knelt her anxious and distressed husband—around her several of us were placed, whose tears sufficiently witnessed our concern. She raised her languid eyes ; gazed earnestly at us—then fixed them upon her mother, " Best and most beloved of parents," said she, " farewell, farewell ; God of his mercy reward your tender care of me, and give us a meeting in the future world.—Oh my father, and are you too there ?—do not let me see your tears : support my poor mother, and remember you have a daughter gone before you, to that place where all sorrow ceases :—But my husband"—She said no more ; then threw her arms round his neck, and both mingled their tears together for some time. She sighed forth, " Best and most dear of men, let me thank you, sincerely thank you, for all the marks of your

tender esteem. Be kind to my pretty babe; oh! why should I say be kind? I know your goodness! but my sweet innocent; let her—" —She stopt short—but soon went on, "I little expected all this pain at parting; this is dying; this is truly the bitterness of death.*

"My dear friends," she continued, addressing herself to all of us around her, "accept my best acknowledgments for all your kind offices to me; if you ever remember me when I am gone, remember, that my soul perfectly rejoiced in God's dealing with me; and that however the weaker passions of nature may prevail; yet I am wholly resigned to his will, thankful to him for all; nay, desirous to quit this world, that I may see my dear Saviour, the Lord of life and love, who gave his life for me, and in whose merits alone I joyfully trust for salvation.

"I am on the brink of eternity, and now see clearly the importance of it.—Remember, oh remember, that every thing in time is insignificant to the awful concern of——" Eternity,†—she would have said, but her breath failed:—she fainted a second time; and

* This pathetic picture (drawn, as we may naturally suppose) from life, somewhat resembles the affecting description of an eminent Christian in his dying moments, in Mr. Hervey's Meditations among the Tombs, page 40, Johnson's edition.

† Well does the poet say,

All, all on earth is shadow, all beyond
Is substance————
How solid all, where change shall be no more!

DR. YOUNG.

when all our labours to recover her seemed just effectual, and she appeared returning to life, a deep sob alarmed us—and the lovely body was left untenanted by its immortal inhabitant.

Now she is numbered among the children of God; and her lot is among the saints.

Well may it be said, "Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

CHAP. VIII.

Should such a wretch to numerous years arrive,
It can be little worth his while to live:
No honours, no regards his age attend,
Companions fly; he ne'er could have a friend:
His flatterers leave him, and with wild affright,
He looks within, and shudders at the sight:
When threat'ning death uplifts his pointed dart,
With what impatience he applies to art,
Life to prolong amidst disease and pains!
—Why this, if after it no sense remains?
Why should he choose those miseries to endure,
If death could grant an everlasting cure!
'Tis plain there's something whispers in his ear,
(Though fain he'd hide it) he has much to fear.

Jennyn's translation of Brown's Poem on Immortality, &c.

AMONGST the various arguments of consolation on the loss of our friends, that which is drawn from the pleasing hope of a

future meeting, and perfect felicity, doubtless is the most persuasive. Grief subsides, and sorrow softens into a tenderly pleasing remembrance ; when the soul is comforted with the happy expectation of one day seeing again—seeing never more to separate, those whom death hath torn from our affectionate embraces, and removed a little before us, to our Father's house.

The transporting thought suffers us no longer to lament our loss ; the flame of our friendship is still kept alive, and the anxious fear of disappointment on our part, becomes an active principle of obedience and duty.—See in this view what we owe to our friends, and how careful we should be religiously to pass the short time of our pilgrimage here, that when we depart, they may have scriptural grounds to believe, that our souls are with God ; and that at his right-hand they shall meet us, in the fulness of bliss.

What a comfort was this to the parents and friends of the amiable Pulcheria ; who, sensible of her constant attention to spiritual concerns, were well convinced, that her change was from mortality to glory, and therefore resigned her with cheerful thanksgiving to God ; weeping over her, it is true, but weeping only the tears of gentle affection ; and living always with a comfortable respect to that happy hour when again they should meet, after a melancholy absence, to part no more for ever.

And shall it be?—Oh thou God of infinite grace! ever studious of thy creature's felicity, various in thy bounties, and infinite in loving-kindness:—it must be so. For whatever conduces most to our bliss, we have abundant evidence to conclude, will be always thy decree.—It must be so!—oh pleasing, balmy hope!* And once again, ye best-loved parents, ye tender solicitous guardians of my youth, once again shall I behold you—but ah! not as once; not as wasted with sickness, and wearied with pain! I shall see you made like unto God; and saved from sorrow, from sin, and from death. Thou too, my Lancaster, loved friend of my youth, with whom so often I have roved along the banks of favoured Cam, and enjoyed all the sweets of virtuous, unpolluted friendship; thou too shalt rejoice my longing sight; for never hast thou been wiped from the tablets of my memory; still have I borne thee, as a seal upon my heart; my first, my dearest, my disinterested friend! Happy, thrice happy thou! far removed from this bad world, ignorant of its ensnaring arts and fatal deceits. Happy, thrice happy thou! offered, in virtuous innocence, and unhack-

* It must be so,——————
Or whence those pleasing hopes, those fond desires,
Those longings after immortality?
'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man.

ADDISON'S CATO.

neyed in the ways of evil men, an unpolluted flower, an early and sweet sacrifice to heaven*—And shall we meet? Alas, too well I know where rests the only doubt. But the blest hope shall animate my soul: still, still will I maintain the painful conflict. Aid me, oh mighty Redeemer, in the fight; and through thy merits give me victory,† give a happy, speedy union with thyself, and with my deceased friends.

But have we not living friends? And shall we in our regard for the dead forget our duty to the living?—Forbid it, heaven! Nor let it be feared, where virtuous friendship reigns in the generous heart, that the love which awakens every tender sentiment for the departed, will make us less anxious to communicate felicity to the surviving; less anxious so to live, that we may leave behind us the sweet odour of our memory, and the anxious desire to enjoy us again. Without this reciprocation of mutual endearments, what is life, and what is man?—Was he formed for himself, or can he be blest in unsocial existence? Can he be contented (nay then let him relinquish his claim to immortality) can he be contented to live

* Early, bright, transient, chaste, as morning dew,
She sparkled, was exhal'd, and went to heaven.
NIGHT THOUGHTS.

† St. Paul declares, we are more than conquerors through him that hath loved us. Rom. viii. 37.

without the love, to die without the tribute of friendly remembrance !—Can he be contented to live the despiser of his God, and to die the afflicter of his friends, who can never think without horror of his future existence ! How then can they dry up their tears ? Oh wretched parents of the more wretched Misella ! my heart bleeds for you : I wonder not that ye refuse to be comforted.

Have we then any value for our friends, are they really dear to us, do we wish to remove every cause of anguish from their souls, and to wipe off every tear of distress from their eyes ?—Let this be a motive to influence our conduct, and to render us active in the discharge of every duty to God and to them ; that so when we are summoned to that future and important world, they may close our eyes with peace, and say with heart-felt satisfaction, "Farewell, oh farewell, thou dearest, best-loved friend ! Thy life, thy love, thy faith, leave us no room to doubt of thy felicity. Thou art happy—we mourn only for ourselves. Yet soon, very soon, we hope to meet thee again. Then farewell only for a little while ; we will ever bear thee in most faithful remembrance ; and treading in the paths of thy virtues, will hope speedily to receive thy reward."

How desirable to leave this world, thus lamented and beloved ! How much better than to drag out a contemptible existence through three-score and ten worthless years,

and at length to drop into the grave, and there to rot, without one longing wish from one lamenting friend ?*

The contrast, perhaps, may strike us; let us view it in Bubulo; whose funeral obsequies I saw lately performed, with all the pomp and vain parade of ostentatious pride; yet though carried to the silent tomb, with all this farce of shew, no eye dropt a tear, and no heart heaved a sigh when Bubulo ceased to breathe.

Full three-score years and ten had Bubulo encumbered with his heavy load, this sublunary world; and it would be difficult to point out any works of benevolence or religion, any works of real worth or humanity, which distinguished these seventy years. Fond of vile pelf, the earth-worm continually toiled to add to his heap; and though rich, and daily increasing in wealth, could never prevail upon himself to communicate of his riches to others, or to serve his nearest relations. Yet smooth were his words, and fair were his promises; and who that knew him not, would have thought him any other than an universal friend to mankind ?

The hours which were not devoted to gain, were consecrated to the service of his nice and enormous appetite, to devouring of flesh, and drinking of wine. He was, in this respect, a perfect animal: and who that saw

* They who live unbeloved, may naturally expect to die unlamented.

him at a city feast, ever thought him of a superior order? His faculties were almost entirely absorbed by this life of indulgence, and gluttony: yet stupid as he appeared to be, he could pretend to scoff at religion, to deny even the being, and to despise the revelation of God.—What a dreadful character! from such slaves of the devil and heirs of hell, good Lord deliver us.

He found a female willing to submit to the slavery of his dominion: she brought him three children, and happily was soon freed from her captivity. The eldest son continued a kind of superior servant to him, till his death, which he had long impatiently wished for, and at length heard of with joy.

The younger, of a more sprightly disposition, unbiassed by principles, rushed headlong into the practice of all fashionable vices, and being unassisted by his father, committed some actions which obliged him to secure himself, by a voluntary banishment to the West-Indies. His daughter, though frequently asked in marriage, could never prevail upon him to forward her happy settlement in life:—he could not spare a fortune for her; she continued with him, therefore, in a state of discontent, and added but little to his felicity by her filial duty, as he was so averse to make any addition to her's by his parental regard. He saw his widowed sister, with many little orphans, surrounded with a variety of difficulties; and

persuaded at length to undertake her affairs, embroiled them more and more; and in conclusion gave them up, because his own business and concerns would not allow him sufficient time to attend to them.

A long and wasting illness warned him of eternity:—he would not receive the warning. He dreaded death, yet would not prepare to die. The jovial associates at the tavern and the club, forsook and forgot him:—his servants attended on, but cursed him:—his children thought every day of his existence too long: the few dependants, which his money occasioned, ceased to regard him, and paid their respects chiefly to his son.—Bubulo observed it, and it grieved him to his very soul. He sent for more and more physicians; they wrote, shook their heads, and took their fees: all hope was gone. The minister of the parish was sent for.—He found the almost lifeless wretch weeping, and lying along the ground; for he would be removed from his bed; but not having strength to support himself, he fell down, and in a few moments died.——Nobody wept, for nobody had cause to weep: the pride of the family gave him a pompous funeral,—and now he is forgotten!

Think not, oh reader, the character of Bubulo exaggerated. He lived!—and alas, too much it is to be feared, there are many such Bubulos living, whose example should

inspire us with detestation of a life, which must certainly end in a death not less dreadful.

N. B. A friend of the writer of these reflections, is pleased to observe, "The reflections on Death please me much. But don't you carry things rather too far, when you say (in your 7th chapter) 'It is an indispensable duty to go to our parish church?'—Was I to live in London, I should rarely or never go to my parish church, if I had a stupid humdrum minister. I long to live in London, that I might hear clever men, &c. I disapprove as much as you can do, running after Methodist preachers and enthusiasts; but should I not prefer a Sherlock at the Temple, if I lived in Fleet-street, to, &c."

It is a misfortune, that when gentlemen quote, they will not refer to the work, and observe the words.—It is not said positively, in the place referred to, that "it is an *indispensable duty*, *&c.*"—The writer of the Reflections doth not deliver his own sentiments in that place; he only says (see page 76) that the lady, whose character is given, Pulcheria, esteemed it (for her part) an *indispensable* duty. It did not follow from thence, that the writer of these Reflections thought it so: though being thus called upon by a man of sense and learning (as his friend confessedly is) he is now ready to declare, that he sincerely thinks there can be but very few exceptions. As to that of a Sherlock, it is too peculiar to be drawn into example.—But what would this gentleman say of those, who, loose to all connexions with their parish minister, *&c.* would leave a Sherlock, nay, and esteem him a legal preacher without unction, *&c. &c.* to hear a butcher, or a weaver, a man without learning, nay, it may be, a stranger to his own mother tongue?

CHAP. IX.

—Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin;
No reck'ning made, but sent to my account,
With all my imperfections on my head!
O horrible—O horrible; most horrible!

SHAKESPEARE.

IN the liturgy of the Church of England, we pray to God to deliver us from sudden death; that is, as her best divines have always explained it, and as reason clearly understands it from a death sudden and unlooked for, from a death instantaneous and unexpected;* for which no provision has been made which finds the soul utterly unprepared, and sends the unhappy creature into eternity, with all his imperfections on his head. A death like this is doubtless to be deprecated, more than the wide-wasting pestilence, or the devouring sword †

On the other side, to the good man, to the soul conscious of its frail dependance here, and properly careful to secure its eternal in-

* Beware Lorenzo, a slow sudden death.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

† The thought of death alone the fear destroys;
A disaffection to that precious thought,
Is more than midnight darkness on the soul,
Which sleeps beneath it, on a precipice,
Puff'd off by the first blast, and lost for ever.

DR. YOUNG.

terests in the world beyond the grave, a sudden death is so far from an evil, that it appears rather a blessing, and in this view has been earnestly wished for, even by men of exemplary piety.*

Indeed, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as sudden death to us, who as soon as we are born, begin to draw to our end; who breathe this sublunary air as temporary strangers, existing only awhile upon the bounty of Providence; and assured that the moment will come shortly, may come instantly, when the Lord of life shall summon us into his tremendous presence.† And as such is the condition of our being, we cannot properly call that stroke sudden; to live in constant expectation of which, is our highest wisdom and duty. Submission to the will of him who is as good as he is wise, is doubtless the best service which such imperfect creatures can pay in every particular; and therefore we act most wisely, when we submit the determination of this point to the Father of mercies, and wait with resignation either from the momentary stroke, or the long and lingering trial, which dismisseth us from the stage of life.—This care only

* St. Paul had a desire to depart, Phil. i. 23. St. John wishes for the coming of Jesus Christ quickly, in the 22d of his Revelations, and 20th verse.

† The young, the old, the rich, the poor,
Can neither, life an hour ensure.

should be ours ; well to act our parts, that the dismission may be with a plaudit, with the approbation of our Judge.*

" Yet, yet, oh Father of unutterable love, thou source of everlasting goodness, yet if the meanest of thy creatures might be allowed to make his request—if thou wouldst deign to give him liberty of choice—suffer him not, oh do not suffer him long to languish on the bed of feeble disease, or excrutiating pain ; nor yet snatch him hence, by an instantaneous stroke, before he has looked his last farewell, and given the final affectionate adieu to all his heart approved, his dearest, tenderest, and most valued friends !† He will not call their kind attendance round his bed, " the afflicting parade of death : he will rejoice in their sympathetic tenderness ; he will struggle to pour forth the voice of consolation and love ; he will point to the hope which upholds his soul, the shining pole-star by which he steers, and by which he trusts his dearest friends shall steer into the joyful harbour of eternal

* Let rich and poor lay this to heart,
Not he who acts the greatest part,
But they who act the best, will be
The happiest men eternally.
RURAL CHRISTIAN.

† Neither a sudden or lingering death is in general to be wished for, but God's own time and way, for removing out of this present evil world, should be the matter of our prayer, and full submission to, as the best and fittest ; while to be habitually ready for the awful summons, should be our daily study and concern.

rest! The hope, the star, the sun, Christ Jesus, the conqueror of death, and destruction of the grave.*

Such was the petition of the beloved Uranius; heaven heard and granted his prayer. This day he sickened; the next summoned and took leave of his friends; perfect in his senses, he saw death approaching, and saw him unappalled! for he had led his life in continual preparation for the awful event.—On the evening of the third day, he closed his eyes, and commended his spirit to God, who gave it; and almost without a groan, exchanged this mortal for an immortal state! Happy Uranius—so let me die! or rather, let me say, "so let me live," and death cannot fail to be blessed.†

How different was the death, and ah! how different was the life of my neighbour Agricola; who often, though in vain, I have endeavoured to wean from the world, and to shew the deceit and delusion of all earthly attachments. But alas, he would not believe! Agricola was a wealthy and laborious farmer; it might, strictly speaking, be said of him, that "he rose up early, and late took rest, and eat the bread of carefulness."‡ He prevented the morning's dawn, and called the

* Hosea xiii. 14.

† Where to live is Christ, to die must be gain, eternal gain; for thus saith the Spirit, "blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

‡ Psal. cxxvii. 2.

hinds to the field, ere the rosy sun peeped over the misty mountains. The flail, early heard resounding in his barn, awakened the rest of the village, and was industry's summons to arise. His shepherds first drove their flocks a-field; and as the bleating multitude poured from their cotes, Agricola stood by, and beheld with rapture the whiteness of their fleeces, and the strength of his sportive lambs. The neighbouring markets saw him always first to enter, and last to leave the scene of commerce and advantage; his samples were always ready, and were always best.

Thus he pursued temporal things with unwearied application, and unremitted diligence; but for eternal things, Agricola never once heeded, never once thought of them! What then? Did not Agricola believe in God, in providence, in eternity? Oh yes, he believed all this;* but he had no time to think of such things! "Hereafter," was his word; it will be soon enough "hereafter!" What then?—Did Agricola forsake the weekly service of the church, and wholly relinquish the worship of God?—Oh, by no means. Agricola never, or very rarely, was absent from the divine service: he generally invited the curate of his little village—(a poor

* True faith on a firm belief in these great and glorious doctrines of divine revelation, will never leave mankind to live (as the common phrase is) as they list, or to act without thought and consideration, but will more or less influence the life, and regulate the conduct.

laborious man, like himself, who rode with all haste from parish to parish, and served three distant churches!) He generally invited him to a regale at his house on the Sabbath; when the time would allow, the good man embraced it with thankfulness; they drank together in friendly sort; and behold, their conversation was of "the oxen in the field." Agricola had sagacity enough to discern this impropriety in the conduct of the *man of God.* His rector's rare appearance in this village, and ready acceptance of his tithes, gave him also no very favourable idea of religion.*—He judged these men servants of the Lord for the wages of the world; and apprehended all religion to be merely lucrative and earthly.† He was desirous to believe it such; hence in the ale-house, at the markets, and in the little club of his village-neighbours, he frequently delivered his sentiments with freedom, when God and his priests were sure to be treated with little or no respect.

Agricola continued his course of life for some years; only as his money increased, so increased his heart's attachment to it;‡ and (as the world was fond to say) his regard to

* From such worldly minded rectors and curates, good Lord deliver us.

† Alas! how many endeavour only to make a gain of godliness, and follow Jesus, merely for the loaves and fishes.

‡ It is frequently observed, and too often verified, the more we have, the more we want.

probity diminished as his possessions were multiplied. The widows and the poor complained of his rapacity and extortion; the fields spoke his covetousness; for he encroached upon his neighbours' lands, and the ancient boundaries were rendered disputable. The markets were said to be forestalled, and his abundance became the source of oppression to the poorer farmer: he wished to stand alone; and beheld with a malevolent eye, the flocks, the herds, and the crops of others.—He grew surly, proud, and insolent: vainly imagining that his wealth gave him an importance, and a right to tyranize over his inferior neighbours.* My connections with him afforded me an opportunity often to remonstrate: he sometimes heard and promised fair, but he heard more frequently with impatience, and would have spoken his dislike, if worldly motives had not compelled him to silence.

Happy had it been for him, if he had heard, regarded, and been wise. Happy for him if he had trusted less to that "hereafter," which never came! For as last summer he attended his reapers in the field, suddenly the heavens grew black with clouds; the sun withdrew his light; the air seemed to stagnate with intolerable fervour; the light-

* Wealth may naturally claim some degree of homage and respect from the sons and daughters of poverty and indigence, but never should (though it too often does) create in the possessors of it, pride, or self-importance.

ning flashed with unremitting fury; vast peals of thunder burst fearfully around; there was no place to fly unto; they were exposed to all the terrors of the storm. Agricola stood aghast—when behold, the thunder-bolt of Omnipotence (a sheet of living flame disclosing itself over his head) in a moment struck him a blackened corpse to the ground!

Oh horrible! most horrible! thus to be sent to our final account!—And shall not the death of Agricola instruct us? Wilt thou, O man, after such an admonition, persevere in forgetfulness of duty and attachment to the world!—canst thou secure thyself from so deplorable an end?—No! thou canst not; thou canst not promise to thyself one future moment!—Death lies concealed in every path we tread, and his stroke will ever be sudden and dreadful, in proportion to the degree of our forgetfulness of that stroke, and our attachment to the vain delights, or possessions of the world.

CHAP. X.

He who liveth in Pleasure, is dead while he liveth. 1 TIM. v. 6.

IT gives the author of these Reflections singular pleasure to have the approbation of a lady, so justly admired for her taste as Lady ————. He esteems it a particular favour that she condescends to make a request to him, which he most readily grants, as assured, that the letter which she desires him to admit, will not only be pleasing, but highly instructive to his serious readers.—The death of Mr. Nash drew her thoughts to it, and therefore she is pleased to inform me, she copied it out for the benefit of the public: it was sent by a person of known worth and piety, some years since, to that son of pleasure.—What effect it had, his future life, alas! did but too plainly shew!

TO RICHARD NASH, ESQ. AT BATH.

SIR,

THIS comes from your sincere friend, and one that has your best interest deeply at heart. It comes on a design altogether important, and of no less consequence than your everlasting happiness: so that it may justly challenge your careful regard. It is not to upbraid or reproach, much less to triumph and insult over your misconduct:—

no, it is pure benevolence, it is disinterested good will prompts me to write ; so that I hope I shall not raise your resentment. However, be the issue what it will, I cannot bear to see you walk in the paths which lead to death, without warning you of your danger, without sounding in your ears the awful admonition, "Return and live :—For why will you die ?" I beg of you to consider whether you do or not, in some measure, resemble those unhappy children of Eli, whom, though they were famous in their generation, and men of renown, yet vengeance suffered not to live. For my part, I may safely use the expostulation of the old priest :—"Why do you such things ? for I hear of your evil doings by all this people. Nay, my brother, for it is no good report that I hear : you make the Lord's people to transgress." I have long observed and pitied you ; and a most melancholy spectacle I lately beheld, made me resolve to caution you, lest you also should come into the same condemnation.

I was not long since called to visit a poor gentleman, ere while of the most robust body, and of the gayest temper I ever knew. But when I visited him, oh how was the glory departed from him ! I found him no more that sprightly, and vivacious son of joy, which he used to be ; but languishing, pining away, and withering under the chastising hand of God. His limbs feeble and

trembling; his countenance forlorn and ghastly;* and the little breath he had left, sobbed out in sorrowful sighs! His body hastening apace to the dust, to lodge in the silent grave,—the land of darkness and desolation. His soul just going to God who gave it;† to enter upon an unchangeable and eternal state.

When I was come into his chamber, and had seated myself on his bed, he first cast a most wishful look upon me, and then began as well as he was able to speak—"Oh that I had been wise, that I had known this, that I had considered my latter end! Ah! Mr. ————, Death is knocking at my door: in a few hours more I shall draw my last gasp; and then comes judgment, the tremendous judgment!‡—How shall I appear, unprepared as I am, before the all-knowing and omnipotent God! How shall I endure the day of his coming?"

When I mentioned, among many other things, that holy religion which he had formerly so slightly esteemed, he replied (with a hasty eagerness) "Oh that religion is the only thing I now long for.§ I have not words to tell you how highly I value it; I would gladly part with all my estate, large

* Psal. cxvii. 2. † Eccl. xii. 7. ‡ Eccl. xii. 14.

§ ————'Tis this alone,
Amidst life's pains, abasements, emptiness,
The soul can cherish, elevate and fill.

as it is, or a world, to have lived in the practice of it. Now my benighted eyes are enlightened, I clearly discern the things that are excellent.

"What is there in the place whither I am going, but God? or what is there to be desired on earth, but religion?"—But if this God should restore you to health, said I, think you, that you should alter your former course?—"I call heaven and earth to witness," said he, "I would labour for holiness as I shall soon labour for life. As for riches and pleasures, and the applauses of men, I account them as dross and dung, no more to my happiness than the feathers that lie on the floor.

"Oh, if the righteous Judge would try me once more; if he would but reprieve and spare me a little longer—in what a spirit would I spend the remainder of my days? I would know no other business, aim at no other end, than perfecting myself in holiness. Whatever contributed to that, every means of grace; every opportunity of spiritual improvement, should be dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver—But alas, why do I amuse myself with fond imaginations? The best resolutions are now insignificant, because they are too late. The day in which I should have worked, is over and gone, and I see a sad, horrible night approaching, bringing with it the blackness of darkness for ever. Heretofore (woe is me!) when

God called, I refused; when he invited, I was one of them that made excuse.—Now, therefore, I receive the reward of my deeds; fearfulness and trembling are come upon me: I smart, I am in sore anguish already; and yet this is but the beginning of sorrows!—It doth not yet appear what I shall be—but sure I shall be ruined, undone, and destroyed with an everlasting destruction!"

This sad scene I saw with my eyes; these words, and many more equally affecting, I heard with my ears; and soon after attended the unhappy gentleman to his tomb. The almost breathless skeleton spoke in such accent, and with so much earnestness, that I could not easily forget him or his words.—And as I was musing upon this sorrowful subject, I remembered Mr. Nash; I remembered you, sir—For I discerned too near an agreement and correspondence between yourself and the deceased. "They are alike," said I, "in their ways, and what shall hinder them from being alike in their end? The course of their actions was equally full of sin and folly, and why should not the period of them be equally full of horror and distress? I am grievously afraid for the survivor, lest as he lives the life, so he should die the death of this wretched man, and his latter end should be like his."

For this cause, therefore, I take my pen to advise—to admonish—nay, to request of you to repent while you have an opportunity,

if haply you may find grace and forgiveness. Yet a moment, and you *may* die; yet a little while, and you *must* die:—And will you go down with infamy and despair to the grave, rather than depart in peace, and with hopes full of immortality?

But I must tell you, sir, with the utmost freedom, that your present behaviour is not the way to reconcile yourself to God. You are so far from making atonement to offended justice, that you are aggravating the future account, and heaping up an increase of wrath against the day of wrath. For what say the scriptures? those books, which at the consummation of all things, the Ancient of days shall open, and by which you shall be judged—What say those sacred volumes? They testify and declare to every soul of man,—"That whoso liveth in pleasure, is dead while he liveth."* So that while you roll on in a continued circle of sensual delights and vain entertainments, you are dead to all the purposes of piety and virtue.

Think, sir, I conjure you, think upon this before it is too late, if you have any inclination to escape the fire that will never be quenched. Would you be rescued from the just vengeance of Almighty God?—Would you be delivered from weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth? Sure you would! But you may be certain that will never be done by amusements, which, at the

* 1 Tim. v. 6.

best, are trifling and impertinent; and therefore if for no other reason, foolish and sinful. It is by seriousness; it is by retirement and self-examination, you must accomplish this great and desirable deliverance.* You must not appear at the head of every silly diversion, but enter into your closet, and shut the door: and commune with your own heart, and search out your own spirit. The pride of life, and all superfluity of naughtiness must be put away. You must make haste, and delay not the time to keep (and with all your might too) all God's holy commandments. Always remembering that mighty sinners must be mightily penitent; or else be mightily tormented.

Your example, and your projects have been extremely prejudicial, I wish I could not say fatal and destructive to many: for this, there is no amends but an alteration in your conduct, as signal and remarkable as your person and name.

If you do not by this method remedy in some degree the evils which you have sent abroad, and prevent the mischievous consequences which may ensue,—wretched will you be, yea, wretched to all eternity. The blood of souls will be laid to your charge; God's jealousy, like a consuming flame, will smoke against you; as you yourself will see

* It is good for every rational creature upon earth, frequently and seriously to ask himself, What am I? what was I created for? and whither am I going?

in that day, when the mountains shall quake, and the hills melt, and the earth be burnt up at his tremendous presence.

Once more, then, I exhort you as a friend; I beseech you as a brother; I charge you as a messenger sent from the great God, in his most solemn words:—"Cast away from you your transgressions; make you a new heart and a new spirit; so iniquity shall not be your ruin."*

Perhaps you may be disposed to contemn this, and its serious purport; or to recommend it to your companions as a fit subject for raillery.—But let me tell you before hand, that for this, as well as for many other things, God will bring you into judgment.† He sees me now I write: he will observe you while you read. He notes down my words in his book; he will also note down your consequent procedure. So that, not upon me, but upon your own self, will the neglecting or despising my friendly admonition turn. "If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it."

With hearty good wishes for your welfare, I remain, sir, your unknown friend,‡ &c.

* Ezek. xvii 30, 31. † Eccl. xi. 9.

‡ The writer of these reflections, thought himself obliged to retain this letter (which, however, he has taken the liberty to correct in a few places) not only out of respect to the lady who communicated it, but because it was published in the Christian's Magazine, in the regular course of the reflections. He finds it too in a life of

Mr. Nash, lately published, and was therefore the rather inclined to retain it, and as that biographer seems to think it too severe, and is inclined to palliate a life of utter dissipation, which certainly merited the severest strictures.

No man living can have a higher regard for benevolence and humanity than the writer of these lines: but he thinks benevolence to the soul of a much higher nature than that of the body; and would be far from leading those who are treading the insidious paths of pleasure with too eager delight, into delusive and dangerous opinions, as if tenderness of heart, and acts of charity, could atone for every other deficiency. Dissipated and fond of pleasure as we are, little need is there to encourage men in so false a pursuit. It is hoped, therefore, that the writer of Nash's life (who he is, I know not) in a future edition, would strike out that offensive and hurtful passage, which every sincere Christian must disapprove, wherein he asserts,—"That there was nothing criminal in his (Nash's) conduct:—that he was a *harmless* creature, whose greatest vice was *vanity*,—and that scarce a *single action* of his life, except one, deserves the *asperity* of *reproach*." And this is said of a man, who, with a heart of exquisite humanity, and which might have been moulded into the noblest form,—was yet, through life, a gamester professed, and an encourager of illegal gambling!—a follower of pleasure all his days, and a perpetual dissipater!—and whose conversation was made up of trifling, of falsehood, and of immorality!

In matters which concern the souls of men, let us be especially careful; for fatal, indeed, may it be to betray them into wrong opinions. In other respects we will unite to applaud Mr. Nash, and will readily join his panegyrists;—we will be thankful to him for the improvements he has made at Bath, by his means the most elegant and pleasing of all public places; and we will be thankful to the editor of his life, for the amusement and satisfaction we have received from so well wrote and entertaining a performance.

CHAP. XI.

So mayst thou live, till like ripe fruit thou drop
Into thy mother's lap, or be with ease
Gather'd, not harshly pluck'd, for Death mature.
This is old age; but then thou must outlive
Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty, which will change
To wither'd, weak, and gray; thy senses then
Obstuse, all taste of pleasure must forego,
To what thou hast: and for the air of youth
Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will reign
A melancholy damp of cold and dry,
To weigh thy spirits down; and last, consume
The balm of health.

MILTON.

IN our two foregoing chapters, we have two very different and alarming characters before us; each sufficient to shew us the vanity of this life, and to awaken in our souls an earnest attention to future concerns. The one, cut off by a sudden blast from heaven in the full bloom of days, and the vigour of health; the other, dragging through a length of wearisome years, a feeble existence,* to the last scene of all.

Which ends our strange, eventful history,
To second childishness, and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing.†

Old age is honorable, and hath its advantages.—But might I presume, Oh! thou

* Mr. Nash died at Bath in February, 1761, aged 88. "The *man* was sunk long before," as one expresses it, "in the weakness and infirmities of exhausted nature."

† Shakespeare.

Almighty and All-wise! short-sighted as I am, and incapable at the best to distinguish my real good from evil, might I presume to judge, or to ask any thing of thee respecting my future state in this poor and perishing world, I would humbly say, "Suffer me not to bear the load of life when every faculty is benumbed; when every power of enjoyment is past; when oblivion darkens the memory, and all the senses seem wearied and sealed up; when the power of being useful to mankind is totally removed; nay, when the power of pleasing is no more, and we become a burden even to our nearest friends."

See the trembling, palsied Hassan! unable to move; scarce able to utter intelligible sounds; weak in his sight; imperfect in hearing; oppressed with pains; forgotten by the world; forsaken by all; and attended only by a distant relation, whom interest alone keeps with him, impatient for his departure, and anxious to possess his wealth. Yet though thus miserable, despised, forsaken, and forgotten; Hassan loves the world; clings faster to it, the more it shrinks from his embraces; detests the thoughts of death; and thinks and talks of nothing with satisfaction, but the delusive mammon of unrighteousness.* Oh, what an old age is this! How wretched an issue of a long and useless

* Luke xvi. 9, 11.

life !—Four-score years have been passed to no end, but the procuring of wealth. Four-score years are over ; the wealth is procured ; the man is about to die, and he hath neither child nor friend to inherit it ! He hath no power to enjoy it himself ; he is dead while he liveth : yet his affections are placed—not on things above,—but ah, sad reverse !—on things below. Can the world produce any object more pitiable or more contemptible than Hassan ?

Vigorous old age, the winter of an useful, virtuous life, is as much to be desired, as the contrary is to be deprecated. Crowned with victory over the inferior passsions, girt round with useful and experimental knowledge, leaning on the staff of prudence, courage,* and resolution, the old man becomes a blessing to society ; we rise up to him with reverence, and rejoice to do him honor.

Such is the hoary Sophron ; we behold him with a degree of awe and veneration ; we consult him with confidence ; and to follow his advice, is to act wisely and consistently. Sophron filled a very busy sphere of

* Bishop Hall gives us an instance of courage in an old plain man in the country : some thieves broke into his solitary dwelling, taking advantage of the absence of his family, and finding him sitting alone by his fire-side, they fell violently upon him ; when one of them fixing his dagger to the old man's heart, swore that he would presently kill him, if he did not instantly deliver to them that money which they knew he had lately received. The old man, looking boldly into the face of the villain, replied with an undaunted courage ; " Nay, if I were killed by thee, I have lived long enough ; but I tell thee, son, unless thou mend thy manners, thou wilt never live to see half my days."

life, and maintained a high reputation for integrity, prudence, and piety. He retreated in proper season from the stage, and now dedicates his time to the great business of self-recollection. Yet is he no absolute hermit nor recluse; nor does he so live to himself as to forget the concerns of others; mild and affable, he delights in the conversation of his friends, and pleasingly instructs, while scarce seeming to instruct; benevolent and humane, he listens to the voice of affliction, and is always the ready friend of the poor and the oppressed. Happy Sophron! he has not lived in vain; his youth was active; his old age is healthful, placid, and serene. Resigned to the Sovereign Disposer's will, he waits contentedly for his approaching change, and looks with joy to his journey's end; looks with joy to that welcome harbour, wherein his weather-beaten vessel must shortly cast anchor!* when his youth shall be renewed like unto the eagle's, and he shall live with God in perfect felicity for ever.†

* With joy the sailor, long by tempests toss'd,
Spreads all his canvass for the wish'd for coast;
With joy the hind, his daily labour done,
Sees the broad shadows and the setting sun;
With joy the slave, worn out with tedious woes,
Beholds the land which liberty bestows;
So death with joy my feeble voice shall greet,
My hand shall beckon and my wish shall meet.

ANON.

† 1 Thess. iv. 17.

If men will not look forward, nor prepare for eternity, we cannot expect they should prepare for old age ; but surely, if we wish or desire to live long,—and it is to be feared this is too much the wish of human hearts,—we should endeavour to provide for the winter of life, by laying up such a store of true wisdom and experience, as may render the close of it comfortable ; or at least soften the many unavoidable difficulties of age.

Intemperance will in the general prevent our long continuance here below ; as it certainly is the source of many pains and evils.* Vice and immorality will render our old age despicable to others and afflicting to ourselves ;† and make us the more uneasy to quit the stage of life, as we draw nearer the solemn change. So that the grand rule to attain a happy old age, as well as a happy death, is to "live well :"—to live, as becometh those who bear the name of Chris-

* Old Adam, the faithful servant, in Shakespeare, speaks thus :

Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty,
For in my youth I never did apply
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood ;
Nor did I with unbashful forehead woo
The means of weakness and debility :
Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,
Frosty, but kindly.——

† As virtue is its own reward, so vice is generally its own punishment.

tians, and profess to be the disciples and followers of Christ.*

Uncertain as is the tenure of human life, this rule, one would conceive, should be universally regarded. For how few, how very few of the myriads of mortals, who tread this earth, arrive at old age, or see the present boundary of human life, the "seventieth year!"† What numbers before that, are consigned to a state eternal and unalterable! alarming thought!—And canst thou, oh reader, promise thyself this length of days? Knowest thou how long thy line shall run? knowest thou when the tremendous Judge shall call, and thou must appear before his impartial tribunal? Alas, human fate is mantled in thick darkness! But eternity—who like Agricola, would be utterly unprepared for it, since the call may come instantly? and then how terrible will be the consequences!

But Agricola's fate was peculiar.—So thought his neighbour Haustulus. He saw the singed corpse of Agricola borne from the field; shook his head, declared the stroke a judgment from heaven, and enlarged greatly on the demerits of the deceased:‡—yet he

* Well might a good man say, not long since, respecting true christians, 'The children of God are best known by their family likeness.'

† Psal. xc. 10.

‡ De mortuis nil nisi bonum, is the language of humanity and benevolence, founded on that well known proverb, humanum est errare.

forgot himself. Haustulus was the pride of the village where he lived: young, healthful, robust: the maidens beheld him with pleasure; the young men heard of his perfections with envy. A lively good-nature recommended him universally; and relying on the strength of his constitution, he was the first and last at every merriment, at every wake, at every scene of rural pleasantry and joy.

Drinking too much at one of these meetings, and staying too late from home, he caught a cold; a violent fever ensued; he became delirious; all hopes in a few days were lost; and he, who had never employed one serious hour about his soul, thus plunged,—ah hapless improvident—into an everlasting state!—Was his fate peculiar? was his death sudden?—It is a death—it is a fate every day exemplified—And would you choose to share such a fate; to die such a death? Surely no: then be careful not to lead such a life. For there are innumerable outlets from this present scene: lightnings and fevers are not the only instruments in the hand of God: the meanest and most inconsiderable agent is all-sufficient with him to stop the throbbing heart,* and to draw the veil of death over the closing eyes.

* Know, thoughtless man, when 'tis thy Maker's will,
A fly, a grape-stone, or a hair may kill.

RURAL CHRISTIAN.

CHAP. XII.

Woe then apart (if woe apart can be
From mortal man) and fortune at our nod ;
The gay, rich, great, triumphant, and august,
What are they ? the most happy (strange to say !)
Convince me most of human misery.

YOUNG.

THOUGH death levels all distinctions, and pays no more deference to the crown, than to the unnoticed head of the meanest peasant ; yet the great seem willing to preserve, even in death, that distinction which they have shared in life ; and therefore refuse to mix their mortal dust with common and inferior clay ! There may be a propriety in this ; subordination is absolutely necessary : and it may be decent, that they who have been elevated in life, should at the close of it, still keep up their due dignity and distinction. But this will not prevent us from meditating in the vault of the nobles, where surely we shall find ample matter for contemplation.

By the side of the church where first I was led into these reflections, such a vault is found. Let me descend into the solemn and sacred recess !—How awful !—As I tread slowly down the stone steps, which lead into it, a melancholy murmer seems to echo through the silent mansion ; the moon just throws in a faint light, sufficient for me to discern the

contents (though indeed no stranger to them) and all my soul thrills with an anxious dread and horror.*—Whence this strange, this uncommon fear upon us, when conversing with the deceased? Helpless dust and ashes as they are, we know they cannot harm or injure us. Nay, and were it possible for any of them to appear to us, surely it would be most delightful as well as most acceptable to hear from them some of the wonders of that unknown world, which is at once so interesting and so important.

> But ah!—no notices they give,
> Nor tell us where, or how they live:
> Though conscious while with us below,
> How much themselves desir'd to know!
> As if bound up by solemn fate
> To keep this secret of their state;
> To tell their joys or pains to none,
> That man might live by faith alone.

Oh, come hither ye sons of ambition, ye children of pride; descend awhile from the lofty summit whereon you stand, and look disdain on all beneath you; oh come, and pass a few silent minutes with me in this lonely vault which boasts the most noble inhabitants; and pride will no more dwell in your eyes, or vanity rise in your hearts.†

* See Hervey's Meditations among the Tombs.

† Ye proud, ambitious, wealthy, young, and gay,
Who drink the spirit of the golden day,
And triumph in existence, come with me,
And in the mould'ring corpse your picture see,
What you and all must soon or later be.

Here are the great and the gay ; the young and the brilliant ; the honorable and the lovely, placed in no mean order or elegance together. Their coffins are decorated with velvet and with silver ; but ah, their contents are only like vulgar dust.—There lies the noble Altamont ; no wonder the remembrance of him first strikes every soul which descends into this vault, and was no stranger to his character. An able writer* hath given us a striking account of his last moments : let us first recollect this, and then make our reflections upon it.

" I am about to represent unto you," says he, " the last hours of a person of high birth, and high spirit ; of great parts, and strong passions ; every way accomplished, not least in iniquity. His unkind treatment was the death of a most amiable wife, and his great extravagance, in effect, disinherited his only child.

" The sad evening before the death of that noble youth, I was with him. No one was there, but his physician and an intimate friend whom he loved, and whom he had ruined. At my coming in, he said :

' You, and the physician, are come too late.—I have neither life, nor hope.† You

* Dr. Young, in his Centaur not Fabulous.

† It is declared in the oracles of divine truth, that " the wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death," Prov. xiv. 32. hence learn the happiness of the one, and the misery of the other.

both aim at miracles. You would raise the dead.'

'Heaven,' I said, 'was merciful.'

'Or I could not have been thus guilty.—What has it not done to bless and to save me?—I have been too strong for Omnipotence!—I have pluck'd down ruin.'

"I said, 'The blessed redeemer—'

'Hold! hold! you wound me!—That is the rock on which I split.—I denied his name.'*

"Refusing to hear any thing from me, or to take any thing from the physician, he lay silent, as far as sudden darts of pain would permit, till the clock struck. Then with vehemence he exclaimed—

'Oh time!—time!—It is fit thou shouldst thus strike thy murderer to the heart.—How art thou fled for ever!—A month!—Oh for a single week! I ask not for years!† though an age were too little for the much I have to do.'

"On my saying, we could not do too much: that heaven was a blessed place—

* They who deny Christ on earth, he will deny in heaven. MATT. x. 53.

† Dr. Young may well say,

Buy no moment but in purchase of its worth,
And what its worth? ask death-beds, they can tell;
A moment we may wish when worlds
Want wealth to buy———

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

'So much the worse. 'Tis lost! 'Tis lost! Heaven is to me the severest part of hell!'

"Soon after, I proposed prayer.

'Pray you that can; I never prayed, I cannot pray.—Nor need I. Is not heaven on my side already? It closes with my conscience. Its severest strokes but second my own.'

"His friend being much touched, even to tears, at this (who could forbear? I could not) with a most affectionate look, he said:

'Keep those tears for thyself. I have undone thee.—Dost weep for me? That's cruel. What can pain me more!—'

"Here his friend, too much affected, would have left him.

'No, stay, thou still mayst hope; therefore hear me: how madly have I talked! how madly hast thou listened and believed! But look on my present state as a full answer to thee and to myself. This body is all weakness and pain; but my soul, as if strung up by torment to greater strength and spirit, is full powerful to reason; full mighty to suffer. And that, which thus triumphs within the jaws of mortality, is doubtless immortal.* And as for a Deity, nothing less than an Almighty could inflict what I feel.'

* This is no small proof or argument in favour of the soul's immortality.

"I was about to congratulate this passive, involuntary confessor, on his asserting the two prime articles of his creed, extorted by the rack of nature; when he thus very passionately exclaimed—

'No, no! let me speak on. I have not long to speak.—My much-injured friend! my soul as my body lies in ruins; in scattered fragments of broken thought. Remorse for the past, throws my thoughts on the future. Worse dread of the future, strikes it back on the past; I turn and turn, and find no ray. Didst thou feel half the mountain that is upon me, thou wouldst struggle with the martyr for his stake, and bless heaven for the flames;—that is not an everlasting flame; that is not an unquenchable fire.'

"How were we struck;—yet soon after, still more. With what an eye of distraction, with what a face of despair, he cried out—

'My principles have poisoned my friend; my extravagance has beggared my boy; my unkindness has murdered my wife! And is there another hell?—Oh! thou blasphemed, yet most indulgent Lord God! hell itself is a refuge, if it hides me from thy frown.'

"Soon after, his understanding failed.—His terrified imagination uttered horrors not to be repeated, or even forgot. And ere the sun (which I hope has seen few like him)

arose, the gay, young, noble, ingenious, accomplished, and most wretched Altamont expired."*

CHAP. XIII.

Adorn'd with all that heav'n or earth could give
To make her amiable———

MILTON.

HOW doubly dreadful is death, when it hurries away an affrighted and unprepared soul from all the splendour and pomp of earthly greatness; from noble mansions; elegant gardens; beautiful and extensive parks; numerous attendants; large possessions; and all the bright circle of sublunary grandeur!

"And must I leave these? Curse upon my fate; must I leave all these?" said the noble Publio, as, stretched upon the bed of disease, he lay struggling with unconquerable pain, like a wild bull in the net; impatient and restless under the hand of Omnipotence; as the untamed lion, in the toils of the Lybian hunter.

* Let the young, wealthy, gay, and inconsiderate votaries of pleasure and dissipation, learn from the latter moments of the wretched Altamont (who is supposed by some to intend the late Lord Bolingbroke) the folly of living unmindful of approaching death, and be convinced of the truth of that common proverb, "they who swim in sin, shall sink in sorrow."

Yes, Publio, thou must leave all these; and, proud and vain as thou hast been of thy titles and honours; as much elevated as thou hast thought thyself above thy fellow mortals, thou must now at length experience that death levels all distinctions, and strikes at thee with as cruel unconcern as he strikes at the meanest peasant who toils in the neighbouring fields.* Why will men forget this obvious truth? Surely if the rich and noble would bear it in mind, it would be a powerful check against every motion of pride, and would instantly crush the least appearance of elation.

If we look to this world only, how superior are the advantages which the great and wealthy enjoy, how infinitely superior to those which the poor and mean possess? But if we look beyond the present scene, nay, if we look only on the parting moment, how great advantages have the serious poor over the thoughtless rich! Poverty denies to men the enjoyment of almost every thing which the wealthy call convenient and comfortable; much more of what they call elegant and pleasurable. But poverty disengages the affections from this transitory scene, and depriving men of the enjoyment, renders them more indifferent to their continuance in the world. He who has nothing to

* Mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas.
Regumque turres.

HOR.

leave behind him, must be supposed to quit the stage with infinite less regret, than he who is surrounded with every thing that can elevate the desires, or delight the heart of man.* Now if we were steady to our Christian principles, and fixed in our pursuits of the blessings of eternity, doubtless, in this view, poverty would be very far from being esteemed an evil.

But let us not conceal the truth; there is often more of envy and chagrin in our strictures on wealth and greatness, than a real contempt of these idols, or a true Christian renunciation of them. And it is to be feared, that our remarks respecting their possessors, are frequently stretched beyond the line of truth. It is a point, of which long experience and close observation have left me no room to doubt, that the great are not the happy: I mean, that true felicity, and an exalted state, have no natural and necessary connection.† Yet am I equally satisfied that the poor are not happy. If the disturbing, anxious, and higher passions molest the repose of the former, the chagrining

* Hence the rich may learn not to despise the poor, while the poor are taught not to envy or covet the riches of the affluent, the honours of the nobles, or possessions of the great.

† Remember, man, the universal Cause
Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws;
And makes what happiness we justly call,
Subsist not in the good of one, but all.

POPE.

and vexatious passions sufficiently ruffle the quiet of the latter. In great goodness and condescension, to his creatures, the all-wise disposer of all things hath made happiness peculiar to no state, and attainable in all; it is a plant which will thrive in every soil, though some may be more kindly to it than others. I have seen it blooming in all the verdure of the most flourishing palm-tree, in the splendid palace of the noble: I have seen it fresh, beautiful, and fragrant, in the lonely dwelling of the peaceful and contented cottager. For the true Christian is the happy man; and he who is indeed a Christian, will find peace and joy, whether in a cottage or a palace.

What could have deprived the gay, the young, the noble, the ingenuous, and most accomplished Altamont, of happiness superlatively pleasing? Had he but known and practised the precepts of that divine religion, whose excellence is sufficiently marked by the name of him who revealed it,—Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God. Every earthly bliss crouded around the noble young man, sedulous to present themselves, and anxious to offer their sweets to his acceptance. Elegant mansions, highly furnished with all that art could bestow, were ready provided for him; parks, beautified with the finest lawns and most extensive prospects, stretched themselves around him; ample estates were in his possession, suffi-

cient to supply every necessity, and sufficient for calls of magnificence, liberality, and charity ; and heaven had blessed him with a mind capacious of the largest enjoyments, and with sense equal to the most elegant refinements. Happy peculiarity—heaven had blessed him also with an amiable consort, whose virtuous endearments were themselves sufficient to have constituted solid bliss ; and in whose love, scarce a man exists, who would not have thought himself crowned with his heart's full content.

Ah ! wretched Altamont,—the want of that Christian virtue which alone will felicitate, robbed thee of the enjoyment of all these blessings, and brought thee in early youth to an untimely death ; thy soul undone, thy fortune ruined, thy wife broken-hearted, and thy orphans beggared !—ah vain and worthless nobility ! what availed to thy miserable remains, the nodding plumes and the escutcheoned hearse, with all the pomp of funeral solemnity ! Here thou liest mouldering in the velvet-clad coffin ; and I, so much beneath thee in station, can weep thy sad fate, and commiserate thee, thou fallen son of greatness !

Oh ye nobles of the earth, consider and be wise. Nobility, without virtue, is but a polished shaft, more quick and keen to destroy ; adorned with Christian faith, it is a coronet of gold, graceful and honourable to

the brow ;* it will dignify you in time, and add honour to your greatest honours in eternity.

So thought the incomparable lady, whose sad relics I view with joy ; and am transported to find in this doleful vault an inscription like the following, over her honoured remains. Let us peruse it, and leave it to our reader's reflections.

"Here rests the body of Mary, Countess of ————, &c.—who departed this life, &c. whom it were unpardonable to lay down in silence, and of whom it is difficult to speak with justice. For her just character will look like flattery, and the least abatement of it is an injury to her memory."†

In every condition of life she was a pattern to her sex ; appeared mistress of those peculiar qualities, which were requisite to conduct her through it with honour, and never failed to exert them in their proper seasons, to the utmost advantage.

She was modest without affectation, easy without levity, and reserved without pride. She knew how to stoop without sinking, and to gain people's affections without lessening their regard.

* Greatness alone in virtue's understood ;
None's truly great, but he who's truly good.

† Praises on tombs are titles vainly spent,
A man's good name is his best monument.

She was careful without anxiety, frugal without parsimony ; not at all fond of the superfluous trappings of greatness, yet abridged herself of nothing which her quality required.

Her piety was exemplary, her charity universal.

She found herself a widow in the beginning of her life, when the temptations of honour, beauty, youth, and pleasure, were in their full strength ; yet she made them all give way to the interest of her family, and betook herself entirely to the matron's part.*

The education of her children engrossed all her care ; no charge was spared in the cultivation of their minds, nor any pains in the improvement of their fortunes.

In a word, she was truly wise,—truly honourable,—and truly good.

More can scarce be said ; and yet he who said this, knew her well, and is well assured, that he has said nothing which either veracity or modesty should oblige him to suppress.†

* Few widows in the present day, God knows, deserve this character, or strive to imitate so praiseworthy an example.

† The reader may be assured of the truth of what is here delivered, as the character was penned by that excellent prelate, Dr. Hough, formerly bishop of Worcester.

CHAP. XIV.

Why all this toil for triumphs of an hour ?
What though we wade in wealth, or soar in fame,
Earth's highest stations end in " Here he lies ;"
And " Dust to dust," concludes her noblest song.

YOUNG.

FROM the vault where rests the precious remains of the great and noble, I ascended into the church, and was immediately led to that part of the sacred edifice, which is dedicated to the memory of these illustrious personages. What superb monuments ! what elaborate decorations ! what pompous inscriptions ! what high sounding epitaphs ! one would imagine from a perusal of these, that all the sons and daughters of this noble house, like those mentioned in another sacred place, were valiant and virtuous ! but alas, even tombs are taught to flatter and to lie.

How strong is the desire of pre-eminence in the human breast ? we wish to preserve it even in death. In some respects it may be well so to do :—but what vanity can be so truly contemptible, as that which assigns a large sum of money to the erecting a splendid monument, serving to perpetuate only the erector's folly and pride ! let the truly virtuous and truly good, the friends to society, and the ornaments of religion, be distinguished in death : for the rest, whatever

titles they bear, or honours they boast, they are but empty names—let them be consigned to oblivion and to dust !*

What a foppery and false taste discovers itself in some of these fantastic monuments before me, the emblems of which it is more difficult to decipher, than the darkest shades of an allegoric poem ! what absurdity and profaneness glare in others ! Methinks I am transported, by some invisible power, while I gaze from a Christian church, into one of the heathen temples ; for their deities croud around me, sculptured with all the pride of art, while I can discern a medallion only of him to whose memory the monument is consecrated !—It looks as if the noble dead had renounced their dependance upon Christ and his gospel ; and returned to the worship of those heathen divinities, into whose hands they seem to commend their fame.

But while I turn away with disgust from these fine, but misapplied efforts of art ; that elegantly simple monument strikes and delights me. It is the statue of the late Duke of ———— : it is finished in the highest taste ; it affords the most exact resemblance of his person ; the posture is the most natural and easy ; proper for the place, serious and contemplative :—it is raised on a plain

* If we cannot speak well of our deceased fellow-creatures, we had better be silent concerning them : " De mortuis nil nisi bonum," is a very suitable motto for reflections on deceased friends, relatives, or acquaintance.

but beautiful pedestal; there are no fantastic decorations; the inscription contains nothing more than the name of this worthy nobleman, the date of his birth and death, and the detail of his illustrious issue. There needs no more, his virtues live in the faithful memory of his friends and of his country; and time itself cannot obliterate the impression, which his benificence hath made on the hearts of the distressed. But could time efface these, should they be universally forgotten; yet will they be had in everlasting remembrance before God, the eternal rewarder of those who live to do good; who make the blessings vouchsafed to them by a kind Providence the exalted means of felicity to others.* Such actions in life will smooth the rough brow of death, and render the departure from honours and opulence not only easy, but joyful!

Methinks, as I stand contemplating this animated statue, I can fancy its noble original before me, as I have often seen him, and imagine I hear him thus addressing me:—"See the end of all human grandeur, and learn to think nothing great in mortality; nothing can be truly great which is uncertain; nothing can be truly good which must shortly have an end. Ere while I flourished in all the verdure which human ex-

* Would to God, such righteous persons were oftener to be found, among the noble and the great ones of the earth!

istence can boast. High in birth, high in honours; dignified with the royal favour; abounding in wealth and of consequence courted and flattered by the obsequious croud.

"In this elevated state I forgot not myself: I remembered that I was a man; that I was to give an account to a superior tribunal, and that my punishment or reward would be pronounced according to the improvement or abuse of the trust reposed in me. When therefore the solemn summons came, when I heard the alarming voice, 'Thou must die,' I was not confounded, though impressed with awe: commending myself to the Father of mercies, I resigned his earthly favours with complacency and thankfulness, in the joyful and animating hopes of a future and better state.*

"Had my conduct been the reverse of this, what should I have gained, or rather what should I not have lost? for my pomp and power could not have arrested the stroke of death, which would have pierced my heart with agony inexpressible, as separating me from all things desirable here below, and removing me to a world where I can neither have hope or desire.—Mine was a better choice: the remembrance of death taught

* The apostle Paul had a desire to depart, and why? because he was assured he should be with Christ, which he knew was far better than to continue in this present world, surrounded with enemies, exposed to temptations, and at a distance from him whom his soul loved. PHIL. i. 23.

me wisdom ;* for they who remember death, will assuredly be wise."†

This is an important truth : the abuse of life proceeds from the forgetfulness of death ;‡ when men fix their standards upon earth, and vainly propose this transitory scene as the end of their being, and the object of their love, what errors and evils are the consequences ! what fearful disappointments here, and what horrid punishment awaits them hereafter !

This was the case with the famous Cardinal of the noble house of Beaufort, who, much unlike that amiable nobleman whose character we have been just considering, remembered not that wealth and greatness were insignificant and unavailing to stop the hand of death ; and, that, gained by indirect methods, they prove, in the conclusion, a never

* Death ! the great counsellor, who man inspires
With every noble thought, and fairer deed ;
Rich death, that realizes all my cares ;
Toils, virtues, hopes, without it a chimera !
Death, of all pain the period, not of joy.
Death wounds to cure, we fall, we rise, we reign ;
Spring from our fetters, fasten in the skies ;
This king of terrors is the prince of peace.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

† Deut. xxxii. 29.

‡ . . . The man who consecrates his hours,
By vigorous efforts and an honest aim,
At once he draws the sting of life and death.

DR. YOUNG.

dying worm to the distracted conscience. When therefore, as history informs us, he was arrested in his mad career, and all the terrors of death were marshalled in horrid array before him, thus he complained, and thus vented his afflicted soul to his weeping friends around:* "And must I then die? will not all my riches save me? I could purchase the kingdom if that would prolong my life. What! is there no bribing of death? when my nephew the Duke of Bedford died, I thought my happiness and my authority greatly increased; but the Duke of Glocester's death raised me in imagination to a level even with kings; and I thought of nothing but accumulating still greater wealth to purchase at length the triple crown! Alas! how are my hopes disappointed!—Wherefore, O my friends, let me earnestly beseech you to pray for me, and recommend my departing soul to God."†

* See Harpsfield's History.

† Cardinal Beaufort was of royal extraction; he was the son of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, by his third wife, Catharine Swinford. He was commonly called the rich Cardinal of Winchester: he died in 1447. Shakespeare, who generally preserves historical truth very exactly, in the second part of Henry the VI. hath given us in lively colours, a description of the Cardinal's death.

Scene, the Cardinal's Bed-chamber.

Enter King Henry, Salisbury, and Warwick, to the Cardinal in bed.

K. H. How fares my lord? speak, Beaufort, to thy sovereign.

Card. If thou beest death, I'll give thee England's treasure,
Enough to purchase such another island,
So thou wilt let me live and feel no pain.

Oh, what an end was this ! what availed this unhappy great man, that sacrificing to his ambition some of the most sacred duties of humanity, he died possessed of a sum, superior to what, perhaps, any subject before him had possessed ?—What availed it, that amidst the terrors of death he consigned large sums to charitable offices ! and least of all, what could avail the ten thousand masses which he ordered to be said for his departed soul ? Heaven is not to be purchased with gold, nor the favour of God to be bought with money. Our redemption was not perfected by such corruptible things, but by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot !

K. H. Ah ! what a sign it is of evil life,
Where death's approach is seen so terrible !

War. Beaufort, it is thy sov'reign speaks to thee.

Card. Bring me upon my trial when you will.
Dy'd he* not in his bed ? where should he die ?
Can I make men live whether they will or no ?
Oh torture me no more, I will confess————
Alive again ? then shew me where he is ;
I'll give a thousand pounds to look upon him.—
He hath no eyes, the dust hath blinded them:
Comb down his hair : look, look ! it stands upright
Like lime twigs set to catch my winged soul.
Give me some drink, and bid th' apothecary
Bring the strong poison that I bought of him !

* Meaning the Duke of Gloucester, of whose murder he was suspected.

and he who after an evil life, thinks to conciliate the regard of the Most High, by donations and masses, dies in a mistake as gross and fatal as that wherein he lived.

Indeed, to the honour of the Protestant church, we must observe, that this most destructive of all errors is seldom found within her pale ; at least, in comparison with its frequency in the Romish church ; where the religious orders are led to deceive even the souls of dying men for the sake of accumulating wealth for their own societies.—Shocking and dreadful !—how contrary to the tenor of that gospel, by which we are assured, that the truly humbled heart, and penitent desire, a lively faith, and undissem-

K. H. O thou eternal mover of the heavens,
Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch !
Oh beat away the busy meddling fiend
That lays strong siege upon this wretch's soul,
And from his bosom purge this black despair.

War. See how the pangs of death do make him grin.

Sal. Disturb him not, let him pass peaceably.

K. H. Peace to his soul, if God's good pleasure be !
Lord Cardinal, if thou think'st on heaven's bliss,
Lift up thy hand, make signal of thy hope.
He dies, and makes no signs.—O God forgive him !

War. So bad a death argues a monstrous life.

K. H. Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all.
Close up his eyes, and draw the curtains round,
And let us all to meditation,———

bled sorrow, can alone recommend us to the Father of heaven, through the merits and intercession of his only begotten Son !

Before I conclude this chapter, let me point out to my reader a noble penitent of the Protestant communion, as a contrast to this Cardinal of the church of Rome ; the late Earl of Rochester, I mean, whose life was defiled with every vice, but whose death was distinguished by the most exemplary repentance—a repentance, not shewn by external gifts, and the appointment of repeated masses for his soul ; but by inward contrition, and a real sorrow for his past sins, by a desire to undo all the evil he had done, and to stop the current of all the mischief which unhappily owed its source to him ;—by an unfeigned application to the only Redeemer of lost sinners, and a fixed resolution to amend his life (if that life should be spared) and to be as exemplary in holiness, as he had been infamous in the practice of every vice.—This is true repentance :* and such a penitent Christ will assuredly redeem, as well from the guilt, as from the defilement of all his accumulated iniquities.

* True repentance is a blessed token of the forgiveness of sins ; none ever truly repented of sin without its being pardoned through the merits of Jesus's blood, which cleanses from all sin.

CHAP. XV.

———Take physic, pomp:
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
And shew the heavens more just.

SHAKESPEARE.

HIGH in health, and recumbent on the downy breast of prosperity and indulgence, Securus rejects our reflections with disdain, and will not, cannot bear to hear of death, the cruel spoiler of all our earthly comforts. "Away with the melancholy strain," he cries; "I cannot endure the voice of this gloomy contemplative. Let him not approach to disturb my repose, nor like the hoarse and ill-boding raven croak his fatal admonitions in my ears." Ah, mistaken mortal, what troubles art thou treasuring up for a future moment!—pity him, heaven, who has no pity for himself!—We will leave him, then, though with sorrow and compassionate regret, and intreat thy attendance, oh serious and Christian reader (who art not afraid to view those mournful but instructive scenes) to the sick, the dying-bed of the poor man,* now that we have visited together, the superb vault of the affluent and

* Carry me, my feet, to the temple of the Lord; to the beds of the sick, and to the houses of the poor.

HERVEY'S MEDITATIONS.

noble. If thou art rich, perhaps thou hast never been called to so sad a scene, and the sight of it may teach thee gratitude and content :* if thou art poor, it will affect thy heart, and lead thee to a serious concern for futurity ; that both temporal and eternal evils may not be thy deplorable lot !

Come then, and let me lead thee up these narrow and miserable stairs, to the wretched apartment, whither I myself was ere while led, and where the poor man lies languishing on the bed of emaciating disease ! Seest thou this dismal dwelling, foul, wretched and offensive !

Hear, the wind whistles through the shattered casement, ill defended by vile rags and darkened paper, sure mark of penury and distress.†

Seest thou that wretched object, pale and meagre, with haggard, staring eyes, and beard unshaven, stretched upon those flocks, with not a curtain round him, and with scarce a cover to conceal his wasted body ?

* We are incited to the relief of misery, by the consciousness that we have the same nature with the sufferer : that we are in danger of the same distresses ; and may sometimes be obliged to implore the same assistance.

JOHNSON'S IDLER.

† ——— Sore pierc'd by wintry winds,
How many shrink into the sordid hut
Of cheerless poverty.

THOMSON'S SEASONS.

Turn round and view upon the floor another miserable heap of tatters. It is the bed of two poor children of this afflicted sufferer! and this, this place of woe, is the only habitation which receives and hides the heads of these poor and helpless children, with their wretched mother and himself! That woman, bathed in tears, and clothed in the ragged garments of poverty, is the wife, the mother of these unfortunate children—hapless wife, and still more hapless mother!

But though narrow this apartment, though offensive and foul, it would well suffice, and be but little complained of, did not want, cruel want, here too fix her dreary abode; could the mother supply the importunate demands of her hungry children, or alleviate the pains and sufferings of her oppressed husband. But alas! the parish withholds relief from aliens to its rights, and how shall the charity of the benificent, find out in their obscure retreats, the stranger and unknown!

Nay, but even poverty itself, with all its dire necessities, might patiently be borne—well, very well, if fiducial dependance upon God, was but found in the sufferer's heart; if heavenly hope dwelt in the afflicted breast; if there was any prospect of an happy issue, when all these mournful trials are overpast, and the soul safely landed on a future blessed and eternal shore! but for this we enquire in vain! from the want of it proceeds far the greater part of these evils. When I came

to talk with Egeno (so call we this poor man) concerning his soul, his faith, his hope, and future expectations ; he fixed his eyes upon me with the most unutterable anguish, and elevating his emaciated hand, sighed out, "Alas ! alas ! sir, sure I shall recover."—"But if you should not," said I, "as God knows there appears but little probability—what then ? what says your conscience ?" "I cannot tell," he replied, "I know I have not been so good as I ought ; but if I live, I will endeavour to be better."*

I turned to his wife, to ask somewhat of his past life ; and to know whether, during his long illness (for he had been long declining) he had ever shewn any concern for his soul, or whether she had ever read to him for his instruction ?—Weak and wretched as he was, he could reply, with abundant acrimony, "She instruct me !—No, she had better first instruct herself, she wants it most." What greater shock could an humane heart feel, than to perceive a fierce altercation likely to ensue, between two persons so mutually and so deeply distressed ? I interposed with some authority ; and endeavoured with all my power, to set forth the dreadful terrors of futurity, before the eyes of this unawakened sinner, just, just

* This is often the language of persons in sickness, who have lived thoughtless of God, their immortal souls, and a future state ; but alas ! how seldom (though life is spared) do they perform their bed promises of amendment and reformation !

about to launch—oh horrible—into its awful gulph! from whence there is no return.

He heard me with attention, and I perceived at length a tear stealing down his pallid cheeks. "I have been miserable," said the poor unhappy object, "all the days of my life; and now I perceive that I must be miserable through all eternity too." Upon hearing this, we could none of us refrain from tears. Oh, who could refrain? to see a fellow-creature lying in exquisite distress, soul and body equally estranged from comfort, health, and ease!—Oh, who could refrain? to see a fellow-creature thus about to perish, ignorant and hopeless, in a land where the glad tidings of the gospel are so constantly and universally preached!

Moved with compassion, I endeavoured to offer some consolation—the utmost which I dared to offer. For alas! how can the ministers of Christ exceed their commission; how can they speak peace to those, to whom there is no peace?*—But my offers were unavailing; he told me, "he had led a wicked and a careless life, and now he found that the end of it was sorrow and despair." After every argument to rouse and to console, I joined in prayer with him and his wretched household; and exhorting him to earnest prayer, and fervent supplication for

* There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. Isaiah xlviii, 22.

himself to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I left them, designing on the morrow to renew my visit.

But from this melancholy office I was prevented by his wife, who came in the morning to inform me that he expired in the night; expired regardless, as it seemed of every thing; utterly stupid, senseless, and unheeding.

And thus too often it happens, that the minister is sent for when the soul is at the last gasp,* when all hope is given up, and when all our endeavours, alas! are as inefficacious, as pouring water into a sieve.—During almost a twelvemonth's illness, Egeno thought not of God, of repentance, or of death. Just when the lamp of life was going out, just when the trembling soul fluttered on the verge of eternity, the alarm was given, and all was confusion, disorder, and dismay. His whole life was a scene of care, of toil, of discontent, and sin. Neglectful, wholly neglectful of religion, his sabbaths were passed in trifling and drunkenness; the scanty pittance he gained by his labour, was too commonly condemned before it was

* Too many appear in the views of death, to place too much dependance on, too much confidence in, and encourage themselves too much from, receiving the sacrament (at the hands of the clergyman) to hope that all will be well with them after death; as if there was some merit in mere ordinances, or partaking of them: no, it is a dreadful mistake; nothing but repentance for sin, accompanied with true faith in Jesus Christ, can afford solid ground for hope of pardon, salvation, and eternal life.

earned: and his wife and children bewailed in hunger and want, the frequent disappointment of his wages. Hence arose brawls and contentions at home; which rendered the little wretched lodging still more wretched. As no surplus was saved, his own, and the clothing of his family, was seldom superior to rags; and he lived without a friend to serve, as he died without a friend to succour him.* Miserable end of a miserable existence! Fearful poverty, and introduction to sufferings far more fearful!—

Good God! what is man! how terrible is it thus to pass a few years in this vale of sorrow, comfortless, despicable, and abandoned:—to know none of the refreshments and delights of this life, and yet wilfully to forfeit all delights of the future! But let me forbear making any reflections, till I have shewn you the contrast of Egeno, in a man of the same occupation and the same rank of life, whom also I lately attended upon his death-bed—and would to heaven my latter end may be like his!

* Would to God, persons in the lower classes of life, would take warning from Egeno, and seriously think in time, of that eternity which awaits them beyond the grave.

CHAP. XVI.

The ports of death are sins ; of life, good deeds ;
Through which the Saviour leads us to our needs :
How wilful blind is he then, who should stray,
And hath it in his power to make his way !
This world death's region is, the other life's ;
And here it should be one of our first strifes,
So to front death, as man should judge us past it :
For good men but see death, the wicked taste it.

ROWE.

IT is common, to hear circumstances and station in life, urged as an excuse for neglect of religion ; to obviate which, we have examples proposed to us of sincere and regular piety, in every station of life.* Thus we are shewn, that religion is incompatiable with no worldly circumstances ; and of consequence, no worldly circumstances can offer a sufficient excuse for a disregard to it.† The wretched Egeno could urge his labour and poverty,—but how ineffectually ! Look at his fellow-labourer Mentor, and learn how weak and frivolous such an apology.

* It must be understood, that I speak here, of the honest and allowable stations of life. There are some professions, with which indeed religion is absolutely incompatible ; and therefore if a man would save his soul, he must either abjure these, or never think of salvation.

THE AUTHOR.

† It is a good proverb, "Prayers and provender hinder no man."

Mentor was of the same occupation with Egeno; worked in the same shop, and earned the same wages. Mentor, too, was a married man, and had children. Thus far there was a similitude; but in other respects, where can that similitude be found?—Diligent and punctual, Mentor was never absent a day from his business, unless detained by sickness or some necessary avocation; ever found in his duty, while Egeno kept holiday, and wasted his important time in drunkenness and riot.

Fearing God, and anxious to please him, Mentor never refrained his feet from the church, and was a regular attendant at the blessed supper of the Lord; strictly observing the Sabbath, and spending it as became a Christian, a husband, and a father; while Egeno's temple was the ale-house, and his devotion only oaths and impiety.*

Go to the places of their abode, and mark the contrast there also; you have viewed that of Egeno—miserable scene of poverty! At Mentor's little dwelling all was neat, clean, and wholesome. He had procured a small house, with a good piece of ground, which he carefully cultivated with his own hands, when he returned from his work in the evening; often rising an hour or two before the time of labour in the morning, to do

* Happy Mentor! may thy example be more generally followed, while Egeno's is suitably reprobated and abhorred.

the business of his garden, and to take care of his crop, which paid him well for his toil. His wife, industrious and careful, contributed her part with gladness ;* her children were brought up with every notion suitable to their station ; and she omitted no opportunity to aid her husband's honest efforts by her frugality and pains. An aged mother dwelt under the same roof with them, and owed a comfortable subsistence to the pious affection of her laborious son.

It pleased God to extend the life of this useful and worthy, though mean and unnoticed man, to a happy length ; for he lived to close his aged mother's eyes, and to pay the last duties of filial regard to her.† He lived to see two of his sons capable of maintaining themselves in the world with decency and comfort ; and treading—distinguished felicity of a parent !—in the steps of their father's sobriety and virtue :‡ sons, to whose

* Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray ;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life,
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

GRAY'S ELEGY.

† Honour thy father and mother, that thy days my be long upon the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee EXOD. XX. 12. This commandment accompanied with a promise plainly implied, if not fully expressed, is no little encouragement to the practice of filial piety and obedience.

‡ Happy proof of the good effects of a pious example and instructions on the minds of children,

care he could with confidence leave his wife, as their religion had taught them, that a peculiar blessing ever attends those who delight to honour their parents,* and "to rock the cradle of declining age."

How pleasing, how instructive to attend the death-bed of such a Christian!—Oh, ye great and vain, ye children of voluptuousness and pomp, how doth the death-bed of such a Christian reproach your follies, and condemn your visionary views!—On that bed I saw him!—true no consultation of physicians was held on his account; no damask furniture decorated his apartments; no carpets were spread over his floors; vessels of silver and gold were not found to convey the little nourishment he took:—but ah! what poor and wretched comforters are these, when the languishing body declares the fatal moment of eternal separation from this present world, near at hand! How much more excellent the consolation arising from the testimony of an approving conscience! The more a man leaves behind him, the more reluctantly he dies:† to die is an easy matter to the poor; and to a good man, what matter is it whether he dies on a throne or a dung-hill? The only misfortune at the

* Exod. xx. 12.

† Covet not the riches, honours, or possessions, of the great and noble; for the less you have in this world, the less reason you will have to regret when you come to die, leaving what you posses.

hour of death, is to find one's self destitute of the supports of true religion.*

Mentor was not destitute of these: "I am arrived, sir, said he, at that period for which I was born, and for which I have been long preparing; and blessed be God, I do not find any terrors in the approach of death. 'Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' I am thankful to the good providence of my heavenly Father for all things;—but how shall I express my thankfulness for his exceeding love in the precious gift of his dear Son! Oh what a support is he to sinful creatures, like us, in this hour especially! Blessed, for ever blessed be God, for his inestimable gift of redemption through the blood of the Lamb, offered up for the sins of a rebel world."

Rejoiced to see him thus triumphant over death, I congratulated his felicity, and remarked the vanity of worldly stations, when God distributes his spiritual favours thus freely to the low as well as the rich. "True, sir," said he, "this is a sweet reflection to the poorer and meaner sort of Christians: it hath often refreshed my soul, and stopped every tendency of murmuring and complaints, which are too apt to arise in our

* Thy force alone, religion! death disarms,
Breaks all his darts, and every viper charms.

BLACKMORE'S CREATION.

haughty hearts, at the sight of the rich, and their plentiful enjoyments.* And it was a pleasing thought often to me in the midst of my labour, that my divine and glorious Saviour stooped to a mean and toilsome employment, and condescended to work with his own hands; setting us an example, and thus alleviating, to the true Christian, all the weariness of fatigue and daily pains.

"The recollection of this, has frequently given me new life and spirits when I have been almost worn out, and ready to sink down with labour. And when I have considered all his loving-kindness toward me, which he has shewn in so many instances, I have always with joy persevered in my duty, and thought myself happy that I had a being to praise and adore him. And now my race is run, and I am about to appear before the Judge of all the earth." "I doubt not," replied I, "you will appear with joy, and be for ever blessed in his kingdom."—"Through Christ, I trust I shall," said he: "my only hope and reliance is on the precious Redeemer; for oh, sir, what am I, what have I, but for him?—and alas! what I have done is so imperfect and unworthy, that it cries for pardon only, not for reward: can it be possible that any human being can

* God frequently makes the poor in this world, rich in faith, and heirs of his eternal kingdom, while he sends the rich empty away; not many rich, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 1 Cor. i. 26, 27.

talk of merit before God !* Lord Jesus, pardon the sinfulness even of my best and most holy services, and wash them in thy most precious blood, which cleanseth from all sin."

"But," observed I, "though you depend not upon any thing you have done, nor apprehend the least merit or deserving in any of your own works, doth it not give your soul peace and comfort, when you look back, and remember that you have done such works, or rather that you have in any measure sincerely endeavoured to obey the laws of Christ ?" "Oh yes," replied he, "great, very great peace ! without this, I could have no peace at all : for without this what test could I have of my sincerity in any respect ? or how would I dare to expect any mercy from the Redeemer ? No, I bless him for enabling me, by his sovereign grace, to do any thing : would to God I had been more diligent, and had done more : without holiness no man shall see him : I have laboured after it with all my might, and to the best of my knowledge ;† but am thoroughly

* A sinner may plead for mercy at God's hands, but never can plead merit, without it is that of Christ's.

† It is greatly to be feared many deceive themselves in this particular ; for where is even the best of Christians, who can truly say in the views of death, they have acted to the best of their abilities, or done all that was in their power, to approve themselves the children of God ? Alas ! every one must acknowledge after having done all they are able to do, we are but unprofitable servants. Luke xvii. 10.

sensible of the imperfections of my best endeavours. May the gracious Saviour pity my weakness, and perfect what is wanting in me !"

He added much more : but from this the reader may easily collect, how happy an end a man of such just sentiments must make. He received the blessed sacrament from my hands, and never did I administer that sacred ordinance to a more elevated Christian. I remember one passage in our conversation struck me. " Sir," said he, " though I had never no great learning, I have always been pleased with reading ; and from some book,* early in my youth, I was taught to consider myself as a pilgrim, appointed to travel through this world to the other, where I was to remain for ever. This notion made a great impression upon me ; and I ever afterwards used to consider myself as a traveller, and therefore entertained no great hopes or fears, respecting any thing below ; but looked continually to the end of my journey, the happiness of which, I was persuaded, depended on my right management of myself during my stay here.* And this thought was the occasion, not only of much content to my soul, and of much peace and resignation under every affliction and cross acci-

* Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.

† A just conclusion, worthy to be adopted and attended to, by every son and daughter of mortality.

dent: but of my continued attention to duty, and of the exactest caution in my daily walking."

Such was Mentor; whose life and death were equally amiable and exemplary. What a contrast to the wretched Egeno! What man but could wish to die the death of the former?—then let him take heed not to lead the life of the latter.* Ye sons of men, in the humbler stations of life, read the important lesson before you. Look at the examples, and revolve their ends:—avoid the vices of Egeno, and copy the virtues of Mentor.—So will you live in credit, and die in peace.†

CHAP. XVII.

Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again—not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Tit. ii. 9, 10.

Let thy soul love a good servant,—and defraud him not of his liberty. Eccles. vii. 21.

AFTER having attended the death beds of the busy and the gay, the noble and the

* To live the life of the righteous, is a good ground to hope of dying the death of the righteous.

† Isa. lvii. 3.

poor; after having surveyed the issue of life spent in those pursuits, which are common to mankind in general, and contrasted every character, to make each more striking; I intended to have stopped here, and considered death in a general view,—to have offered arguments and consolations against the fear of it; and as a conclusion to have contemplated the great things which follow after,—judgment, heaven, and hell.*

But a funeral, at which I was called lately to officiate, leads me to postpone these reflections to a following chapter; that I may pay some tribute to the memory of an humble man, whose virtues deserve to be had in honour, though his low station denies him the loud applause of public celebrity. But why should fame be the prerogative of greatness; of worldly greatness and external splendor?—To do well, and to deserve in every station, is to be great, and ought to obtain praise—and will obtain praise!—Yes, ye sons of obscurity, whom no titles dignify,—whom no pedigrees ennoble,—but whose virtuous actions are more illustrious than either,—yes, ye shall inherit praise, as much superior to that which men, the world, and time can give,—as God, as heaven, and eternity are superior to all these.

* Death, judgment, heaven, and hell, think, Christians, think,
You stand upon eternity's dread brink;
Faith and repentance seek with earnest prayer;
Despise this world, the next be all your care.

TRAPP.

This bright and blessed honour is not conferred according to rank, birth, or title; but to high and low, rich and poor, the glorious price is held forth alike, and to him who doeth best, shall the best recompense be given.*—Yet one sure method to obtain this blessing in that kingdom, where all distinctions eternally cease, is to act and live agreeably to those distinctions and subordinations, which God hath wisely appointed upon earth: I mean the sure method to obtain God's favour, is to acquiesce thankfully in that station of life, wherein he hath placed us; and with entire submission, to discharge faithfully and uniformly all the duties of it.†

So thought the worthy man, whose decent funeral was lately solemnized. He had been servant in a neighbouring family above twenty years; and during that time had abundantly approved himself by the strictest fidelity. A rare example, when the depravity of this order amongst us, is the subject of universal complaint, and the severest tax upon the domestic felicity of numbers! Though perhaps the cause and the remedy of the evil are both to be drawn from other sources, than those which are generally proposed: to be drawn rather from the heads of families, than from those who act in me-

* Gen. iv. 7. Rom. ii. 6, 7. † Rev. ii. 10.

nial capacities.* A prudent and conscientious master, for the most part makes prudent and regular servants; and it is from the increase of such examples, that we must expect improvement in our attendants.

Petrucio (so call we the subject of our present chapter) was happy in this respect; happy in a master, whose own life was regular, and whose great care was to discharge every duty, which he owed, particularly to his servants. He was well recompensed by the love and fidelity of his servants in general, but of Petrucio in particular. This faithful domestic had right notions of God, himself, and his duty. He murmured not at the inferiority and servility of his own condition: he knew it was the will of God; as such he received it with thankfulness, and lived in it with cheerful content: considering himself as the servant of Christ, he acted conscientiously, as desirous to please him, and not man only.

Reflecting that the eye of God, if not of his master, was always upon him,† he feared to neglect his duty,‡ and thought it a poor

* The influence of example in good masters is generally beneficial respecting servants:—would to God they had no other examples set before them.

† Omnia cum videat, nulli Deus ipse videtur.
MANT.

‡ "Thou God seeth me," is a reflection ever to be remembered by all, and will prove a successful antidote to the wilful practice of known sin. GEN. xvi. 13.

excuse for himself, if he could escape the notice of an earthly observer, while all his actions were minutely scanned by him who searches the inmost secrets of the heart.—Hence he served not "as a man-pleaser, but as the servant of God, in singleness of heart as unto Christ; not with eye-service, but as the servant of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;" all his service was done with a good will, not with a morose restraint or sourness,—as to the Lord, and not to man only,—for he knew, and ever bore in mind that comfortable truth, "That whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."*

In consequence of these right principles, Petrucio ever esteemed his master's interest as essentially connected with his own: and would as soon have suffered the extremest punishment, as to have joined in any collusion to defraud, much more to have himself defrauded his master. It was his constant endeavour to preserve the strictest economy in every part of his trust, and he would express the highest wonder and deepest abhorrence at many of those infamous arts, which modern polite servants would frequently advise him to practice, and to which tradesmen, for the basest ends, would often attempt to allure him.

* Ephes. vi. 5, &c.

"Though I am in a state of servitude upon earth," he would often say, "I hope to be in a state of freedom with God hereafter: but how can I hope for this, if I am deficient in those easy duties, which are required in my present station? For surely, when all the necessaries of life are found me, it is easy to be just and faithful, honest and industrious—nay, gratitude itself alone should lead to this, for his sake, who provides so well for me; and who requires certainly that I should repay all his expense, with every worthy and cheerful endeavour possible on my part.*

We may well believe that a servant with such notions, must be uniform and excellent in his whole conduct. And such indeed was Petrucio. He received every order with silence and humility: he executed every order with diligence and punctuality. He pretended not to be wiser than his directors; and he was a stranger to the odious malapertness, which is one of the distinguishing qualifications of contemptible modern valets. His long continuance in the family, had wrought in his breast a tender affection, not only for his master and mistress, but also for their children and relations: and at length their interest was become so peculiarly his own, that he shared

* Would to God, servants in general would take pattern from Petrucio, and think and act as he did; happy indeed would the master of such servants be, and happy would be servants in so doing.

in all their joys, and partook of all their sorrows.

The fruits of his fidelity were the confidence and esteem of his master and mistress; the affection of the family; the reverence of his fellow-servants; and a comfortable saving, on which he proposed to live, if ever he should have cause to quit the service; and which, dying in it, he had the pleasure to bequeath to a widow-sister and her children, whom it rescued from many difficulties, and placed in a happy situation, above dependance and necessity.

During the time of his last sickness, he frequently declared that the tenderness and regard of his master and mistress to him, more than overbalanced the merit of all his former services, and were an abundant recompense to him. For Petrucio had a generous mind, and was sensible of affectionate treatment.* His master every day visited his sick room, and read and prayed by his bed-side: his mistress with her own hands administered his medicines, and took care to supply him with the most proper nourishment. His humility alone could equal his gratitude and thankfulness on such occasions; and when upon his expressing his great obligations, his mistress once said, that

* Gratitude is commendable and praiseworthy in all; from the poor and needy to the wealthy and benevolent, as well as from every rational creature under heaven, to their great Creator, Benefactor, and Preserver, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not.

"this, and much more than this, was due for his faithful services." "And that word, madam," said the honest fellow, with tears in his eyes, "that word is a reward sufficient for more than twenty times such services as mine."

Thus died this useful worthy man: and to do all honour to him, his master buried him at his own expense, with all the decency and propriety conceivable:—six neighbouring farmers, tenants to his master, bore his pall; his master and mistress walked as chief mourners; the rest of the family attended in procession, and had mourning given them on the occasion; and so great was the esteem in which this faithful servant was held (who, I should have observed, was the willing and joyful hand by which his master and mistress distributed their liberal charities)—that scarce a dry eye was seen at his funeral: and his death and funeral, I persuade myself, have done more to reform the servants in that part of the world, than twenty lectures to them could have achieved. "See how Petrucio, though a servant, is honoured and respected!"—was the general cry: and the general reason given on all hands was, "Because he was faithful, honest, and industrious."

And let servants, in conclusion, be told, that if they would obtain such favour here, and such recompense as Petrucio doubtless hath obtained, their only method is to go and

do likewise; is to imitate his example; is to make their master's interest their own. The best motive upon which they can do this, is to consider, that in so doing they serve the Lord Christ, and may be assured, that according to their fidelity, so shall they reap hereafter. For God is no respecter of persons.*

*** I subjoin to this chapter the following excellent rules, which were sent by an unknown hand, entirely agreeing with the gentleman who sent them,—"That if they were hung up in all kitchens and servants' halls (printed on a large sheet) they would be extremely useful."

To faithful, honest, and industrious Servants.

A GOOD character is valuable to every one, but especially to servants, for it is their bread; and without it they cannot be admitted into a credible family: and happy it is, that the best of characters is in every one's power to desereve.

II. Engage yourself cautiously, but stay long in your place; for long service shews worth, as quitting a good place through passion is a folly, which is always repented of too late.†

* Acts x. 34.

† Every servant, whether male or female, who attend to those rules, will be approved and respected, by all whom they are called to serve.

III. Never undertake any place you are not qualified for; for pretending to do what you do not understand, exposes yourself, and what is still worse, deceives those whom you serve.

IV. Preserve your fidelity; for a faithful servant is a jewel, for whom no encouragement can be too great.

V. Adhere to the truth, for falsehood is detestable; and he that tells one lie, must tell twenty more to conceal it.

VI. Be strictly honest; for it is shameful to be thought unworthy of trust.

VII. Be modest in your behaviour; it becomes your station, and is pleasing to your superiors.

VIII. Avoid pert answers; for civil language is cheap, and impertinence provoking.

IX. Be clean in your business; for slovens and sluts are disrespectful servants.

X. Never tell the affairs of the family you belong to; for that is a sort of treachery, and often makes mischief; but keep their secrets, and have none of your own.

XI. Live friendly with your fellow-servants; for the contrary destroys the peace of the house.

XII. Above all things avoid drunkenness; for it is an inlet to vice, the ruin of your character, and the destruction of your constitution.

XIII. Prefer a peaceable life with moderate gains, to great advantages with irregularity.

XIV. Save your money, for that will be a friend to you in old age; be not expensive in dress, nor marry too soon.

XV. Be careful of your master's property: for wastefulness is sin.

XVI. Never swear, for that is a sin without excuse, as there is no pleasure in it.

XVII. Be always ready to assist a fellow-servant; for good nature gains the love of every one.

XVIII. Never stay when sent on a message; for waiting long is painful to a master, and quick return shews diligence.

XIX. Rise early, for it is difficult to recover lost time.

XX. The servant that often changes his place, works only to be poor: for the rolling stone gathers no moss.

XXI. Be not fond of increasing your acquaintance; for visiting leads you out of your business, robs your master of your time, and puts you to an expense you cannot afford; and above all things take care with whom you are acquainted, for persons are generally the better or the worse for the company they keep.

XXII. When out of place, be cautious where you lodge; for living in a disreputable house, puts you upon a footing with those that keep it, however innocen you are yourself.

XXIII. Never go out on your own business without the knowledge of the family, lest in your absence you should be wanted; for leave is light, and returning punctually at the time you promise, shews obedience, and is a proof of sobriety.

XXIV. If you are dissatisfied in your place, mention your objections modestly to your master or mistress, and give a fair warning, and do not neglect your business, nor behave ill, in order to provoke them to turn you away; for this will be a blemish in your character which you must always have from the last place you served.

CHAP. XVIII.

Faith builds a bridge across the gulph of death,
To break the shock blind nature cannot shun!
And lands thought smoothly on the farther shore,
Death's terror is the mountain faith removes:
That mountain barrier between man and peace.
'Tis faith disarms destruction, and absolves
From every clamorous charge the guiltless tomb.

YOUNG.

WHILE wrapt in the silence of the night, I take my solitary and contemplative walk in the church-yard, with what a feeling concern do I reflect on the living world around me!—How striking the contrast! Here

rest in peace the well-nigh forgotten remains of those, who once, it may be, filled up busy spheres on the earth.* All those distinctions which they so anxiously courted, are now for ever done away: all those animosities which they so warmly agitated, are now for ever hushed and forgotten; and all those complainings and sighs which they so mournfully uttered, are silenced, are silenced for ever, and heard no more.—Yet on the great theatre of the world the same parts are still acting, the same ardour for place and pre-eminence; the same propensity to malice and envy; the same repinings and lementations are found:—as if generations preceding read no lessons of instruction; as if men utterly forgot that their hour appointed was hastily advancing.

"Oh that they were wise, that they understood these things, that they would consider their latter end!"† Benevolent wish! for nothing so powerfully, so strongly teaches, as a consideration of that latter end ‡—which is of general concern, for every son of Adam is equally interested therein. Can

* Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-trees shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell forgotten laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.
Gray's Elegy in a Country church-yard.

† Deut. xxxii. 29.

‡ See Hervey's Meditations among the tombs, page 23.

we reflect upon the day of dissolution approaching, when every sublunary hope shall cease, and every worldly project vanish as the shadow? Can we survey the solemn mansions of the dead, where the mingling dust bespeaks the folly of earthly pre-eminence and honour,—and yet pursue, with unremitted chace, the fleeting vanities of life? and yet indulge, with unrelenting hearts, the burning passions, which torture human peace, and murder man's best felicity?—Nay, can it be possible that we should look beyond the grave, and recollect that an existence everlasting awaits us, and not use every wise, every scriptural method to secure to our souls the comforts of that existence, when time hath closed upon us, and we have bidden an eternal adieu to all things here below.*

Thrice awful meditation! May its powerful instructions deeply impress my soul! Nothing teaches like death. It is indeed the wages of sin, and a fearful evil, we must needs allow it! But then it is a persuasive

* Since we can die but once, and after death
Our state no alteration knows;
But when we have resign'd our breath,
Th' immortal spirit goes
To endless joys or everlasting woes;
Wise is the man who labours to secure
That mighty and important stake,
And by all methods tries to make
His passage safe, and his reception sure.

POMFRET.

monitor, and superior to all things, convinces us of, and leads us to combat and conquer sin.

The sting of death is sin. From thence we may plainly discover, what is the grand remedy against its fear and its power to do harm. Destroy sin, and death becomes no longer formidable; he cannot hurt or annoy, for his sting is taken away. But how shall we achieve this desirable enterprise, how destroy the sting of death? It is done, already done for us! "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Here then, thou trembling mortal, who art every day distressing thy feeble soul with the fear of approaching death,—here behold the first and greatest consolation under it: "Faith in Jesus Christ," who through death destroyed him who had the power of death; and will deliver thee from that fear of death, which all thy life time hath kept thee in bondage! Look to that triumphant conqueror, who died on the cross, and lay in the grave, to sanctify it for us: see in his precious redemption a full pardon for all thy offences; and with the eye of faith steadily fixed upon him, thou also shalt triumph over an enemy already vanquished.†

* 1 Cor. xv. 57.

† Believe, and look with triumph in the tomb.

This is the grand remedy against, and chief consolation under the fear of death, "the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ:"* which properly understood, comprehends every other consolation. But that we may not be misunderstood, let us as a second consolation and remedy, recommend to the soul, desirous of victory over this fearful foe, "an earnest care to live a life of gospel obedience through that faith in Christ,"† which indeed without such obedience, will be found too weak to support the firm structure of a joyful hope. Live as you would wish to have lived when your anxious head is laid upon the dying pillow:‡ live as the gospel of that Saviour directs, through whom alone you expect salvation; live as you are assured he will approve. The prospect of death will the nanimate your soul with fortitude and delight: and you will have a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, which is best of all.§

There again we enjoy another consolation, exquisite and unspeakable, under the appre-

* Whom to know aright is life eternal. JOHN xvii. 3.

† True faith works by love in the heart, to Christ, his ways, ordinances and people; and obedience in the life, to all his laws, precepts, and commands.

‡ Repent, believe, and mourn your errors past,
And live each day as though it were your last.
RURAL CHRISTIAN.

§ Philip. i. 23.

hensions of death! "We shall be with Christ!" We shall live with him, and be like him! Like him in purity and holiness, and like him in happiness too!—Transporting thought! Can death be esteemed an evil—nay rather, must we not welcome that as our greatest good, which conveys us from a dying world, like the present, to a kingdom, where joy, and rest, and peace, shall eternally surround us?—But of this we shall speak more hereafter.

Another reflection which ought to abate our fears, and reconcile us to death, is "the obsolute certainty, and unavoidable necessity of it." Could our fears at all avail to prevent the stroke, or even to respite it, they might well be allowed, and we should have some plausible reason to urge in their support. But alas, the stroke is inevitable.* Surely then it is our wisdom to familiarize ourselves to an event, which must come shortly, and which, to render us still more watchful, may come instantly. Claim ye then no more the character of rational, ye simple ones of the earth, who start at the thoughts of death,† and use every method which ingenious thought can devise, to dissipate and drive it from you.—Lo, the moment comes, and utterly unprepared, ye

* Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return. GEN. iii. 19.

† The thought of death alone the fear destroys.

DR. YOUNG.

must stand before your God. Conquer yourselves: and remembering that death will come when it will come, review it in all its circumstances, and learn through Christ, to gain a happy victory over this dreadful leveller of all human distinctions.

Reflect of what will death deprive you: not of being—which to us must certainly be of all things most dear. No; the soul cannot cease to be; it only changes its circumstances and state.

"But it separates those old and familiar friends, the body and the soul."—And let us bless God for the separation. For can we regret a separation from that flesh, which is the seat of sin and of diseases, and which from both, hath so frequently afflicted us with the most piercing distress? No; farewell then to the body (we will say with joy) since thereby we bid an eternal farewell to sickness, pain, and sin.*

"But death separates us from this world!" True; and it introduces us to one, utterly unlike the present, where sorrows and losses, disappointments and trials, shall never more be known.—"But it separates us from our friends!"—Afflicting separation! The tender heart must bleed, and the affectionate eye cannot fail to drop a tear! Yet look forward, and behold—see in the blissful

* To be absent from the body and present with the Lord, will be, more or less, the wish of every real believer in Christ. 2 Cor. v. 8.

realms to which thy spirit is soaring—friends, immortal and unalterable friends awaiting thy glad arrival !—and perhaps many already, many near to thy heart, have gone before thee, and will give thee a joyful and blessed welcome. Nay, yet a little while, and thou shalt receive to thy rejoicing embraces, those whom thou hast left weeping in this vale of sorrow.*

Armed with these consolations, who shall fear the stroke of death? Who but must rejoice to relinquish this scene of trial and trouble, and to commit their souls into the arms of an ever-living Redeemer,† who died to save his people from their sins : of a Father, whose unwearied care is over all his works, and whose watchful providence extendeth to the minutest concerns of all his creatures ? In that reviving truth the soul must find comfort, as under every trial and affliction, so especially when the moment of death approaches ; which a child submissive to the better will of such a father, will receive with thankfulness and Christian resignation !

As therefore death must come, and after death, judgment, and a state of bliss or misery unalterable, let us, like the wise virgins,

* Though death will come, yet give your sorrows o'er,
For all those pious friends, who're gone before,
You'll meet ere long in heav'n, to part no more.
G. W.

† Job xix. 25.

keep our lamps always ready trimmed and burning, that we may never be found unprepared.* And that we may still be excited to a stricter watchfulness—let us contemplate those great things that are to come hereafter; let us now suppose ourselves as summoned to appear before the judgment-seat of God;† and as about to receive the eternal reward of our deeds,‡—heaven or hell;—affecting thought!—Holy Father—we tremble and adore! Blessed Jesus, be our advocate and intercessor!

* Mat. xxv. 10. † Acts xvii. 31. John v, 28, 29.

‡ 1 Pet. i. 17. Rom. ii. 11, 12.

And is there a last day? and must there come
A sure, a fix'd, inexorable doom?
. . . . . .
The Judge descending, thunders from afar,
And all mankind is summon'd to his bar.
The echoing voice now rends the yielding air,
For judgment, judgment, sons of men prepare.

DR. YOUNG'S LAST DAY.

CHAP. XIX.

Shall man alone, whose fate, whose final fate
Hangs on that hour, exclude it from his thought?
I think of nothing else: I feel! I feel it!
All nature, like an earthquake trembling round;
All deities, like summer's swarms on wing!
All basking in the full meridian blaze!
I see the Judge enthron'd! the flaming guard!
The volume open'd! open'd every heart;
A sun-beam pointing out each secret thought!
No patron! intercessor none! now past
The sweet, the clement, mediatorial hour!
For guilt no plea: to pain no pause, no bound!
Inexorable all! and all extreme.

NIGHT THOUGHTS, NIGHT IX.

DID our existence end with this life, how little to be dreaded, yea, in many cases, how much to be desired were death! But our existence doth not end with this life; eternity is before us; and it is eternity which makes death of so much consequence.* How awful, how alarming is that representation which the sacred scriptures give us of the solemn day approaching, which is to determine our fate for this eternity! Let us contemplate the stupendous scene; for who can dwell upon such interesting reflections, without serious thoughts, and heaven-di-

* Beyond the grave two states alone remain,
Of endless pleasure, and eternal pain.

rected resolutions? The steady belief of a future judgment is sufficient to make all men zealous in duty.*

The doctrine of a future judgment is peculiar to the Christian revelation. Human reason could never discover it; for human reason could not discover how the God of the whole earth would be pleased to deal with his creatures, and with that world which he has formed for them.—But in much mercy, to animate and awaken our best desires, the eternal Lord of all hath declared, that an endless and unalterable state is reserved for us, happy or miserable, as we comply with, or refuse the terms of his covenant: and that upon a day appointed, he will pass the righteous sentence upon all; when those who have done good, shall go into eternal life, and those who have done evil, into everlasting fire.†

Alarming, important truth!—What thinking creature can be indifferent to it! Picture the awful scene to your view; imagine yourself now called to the bar of inviolable justice! there enthroned in glory unutterable, sits the sovereign Judge, the gracious

* . . . . . If there is an hereafter,
And that there is, conscience, uninfluenc'd,
And suffer'd to speak out, tells every man,
Then must it be an awful thing to die.

BLAIR'S GRAVE.

† Mat. xxv. 46.

Redeemer! Thousand thousands minister-ing unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before him! See that earth, once the seat of all your cares and fears, now wrapped in universal flame: hark, the heavens are passing away with insufferable noise; the sun is extinguishing; the stars are started from their spheres, and all this system of created things is hastening into utter destruction! The trump, the awakening trump hath sounded, and all the dead, rising from their sepulchres, are summoned to appear before the impartial Judge!*

Oh, terrible distress!—Where, where shall we fly, if conscience condemns us, and we dare not approach that impartial Judge? In vain shall we call upon the rocks to hide, or mountains to cover us; rocks and mountains are themselves dissolving; they can give neither shelter for our heads, nor support for our feet.† In vain shall we solicit our friends to intercede;—our friends shall be then too deeply concerned for themselves to regard the cause of others; and what,

* Man starting from his couch, shall sleep no more;
The day is broke which never more shall close;
Great day of dread, decision and despair!
I see the Judge enthron'd, the flaming guard;
The volume open'd, open'd every heart.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

† Where, where for shelter shall the guilty fly,
When consternation turns the good man pale?

DR. YOUNG.

ah—what could patrons or friends avail, when "the clement, the mediatorial hour" is now absolutely passed and gone;—and we have not made him our intercessor, who would have been as mighty to save and reward, as he now is to punish and avenge? What too will dissembling profit us; or how can we expect to deceive him whose eyes are as a flame of fire, who pierceth into the heart's inmost recess? Who will lay open before us the whole volume of our lives, and place in the universal view of all, those thoughts, and words, and deeds of darknesss, which in vain we secreted from the eyes of our fellow-creatures upon earth—for who can escape the eyes of Omniscience?

Can tongue express, can heart conceive the anguish which will rend our souls, when the dire sentence of condemnation shall pass—a sentence from his lips, which breathe only mercy and love to the just;—and which we despise, while calling to us upon earth with the most pathetic invitations,—"Come unto me, and I will give you rest.* Aggravating circumstance! We have abused his love! We might have been blessed, eternally blessed.—But now the fatal moment is arrived, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,"† is the dreadful malediction.

* Mat. xi. 28. † Mat. xxv. 41.

No, my soul, through this Redeemer's never-changing love, we will hope, confidently hope to avoid the horrors of this extreme distress. And oh, that every soul of man would, with such composed and solemn thought meditate upon it, that joyful songs of thankfulness only might on that day be heard: that with humble trust we might approach the Judge's throne, and find in him, —not the Almighty avenger,—but the Father, the Saviour, and eternal Friend!

What can equal the goodness of our God? or what could we desire more gracious at his hands, than that he should seat upon the tribunal of justice, that Son, that only begotten and beloved Son,* who once came to our earth, not to judge, but to be judged; who died for those sinners, on whom he is now willing to confer an eternity of bliss.†

Happy he, who, convinced of this sovereign grace, looks continually and steadfastly, with the eye of faith, to that great day when the Saviour shall come in the clouds! Then shall his fear be for ever removed, and all his anxious doubts shall vanish as the

* John v. 22.

† O may I breathe no longer, than I breathe
My soul in praise to him, who gave my soul
And all her infinite of prospect fair.
Cut through the shades of hell, great love! by thee,
O most adorable! most unador'd.

NIGHT THOUGHTS.

smoke; then with an accent of melodious sweetness, with a look diffusing love and joy ineffable, the great Redeemer shall welcome him, together with all those who have been faithful unto death, shall welcome them and say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world!"—Nay, he shall vouchsafe to enumerate those general deeds of Christian benevolence, which such souls have performed through their faith in him: and not only enumerate, but acknowledge them, as if they had been conferred upon himself,—"Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."*

How forcible, how affectionate a motive to us, now in the day of our pilgrimage, to be diligent, continually and unweariedly diligent in all such acts and offices of love! Christ will accept them, our Redeemer, our Judge, our hope, and our all, will accept our tender charities to his members, and our fellow-creatures; will accept our works of faith and labours of love,† as if we had been happy enough to have had an opportunity of performing them, even to his own person. And publishing the grateful tidings to all around, he will allow us to partake of his triumph, and to enter, amidst his returning saints and angels, those regions of glory

* Mat. xxv. 40. † 1 Thess. i. 3.

and peace, where we shall live with him, and enjoy everlasting happiness.

But we will refer to our next chapter what we have to add respecting the peculiar blessedness of that state, and the exquisite misery reserved for those "who know not God, and who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus, who will be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,* when he shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance; and when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them who believe in that day."† A passage of scripture which cannot fail greatly to influence those who give it that attention which its importance deserves: for who can think of everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, without an anxious desire to avoid that destruction, the very terror of which chills the heart.

* Prostrate, my contrite heart I rend;
My God, my Father, and my Friend!
Do not forsake me in my end!

LORD ROSCOMMON.

† 2 Tim. i. 7.

CHAP. XX.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. MAT. xxv. 46.

ETERNAL punishment! Eternal life! What awful words! What solemn events! Who can read them, and be unconcerned? Who can think of them, and be indifferent to the momentous truths they impart?—Were our existence to terminate with the present passing scene, indulgence might be laudable, and every self gratification right.* "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die: let us crown ourselves whith rose-buds; let none of us go without his part of our voluptuousness;" would then be the language of reason and truth.—But eternity before us—consummately blessed, or consummately wretched—and death every moment shaking his dart triumphantly over us, preparing to strike once, and strike no more; can it be possible that any rational being should remain unsolicitous, and neglect to prepare for the important realities of eternity, while

* If death was nothing, and nought after death!
If when men died, at once they ceas'd to be,
Returning to the barren womb of nothing
Whence first they sprung, then might the debauchee,
Untrembling mouth the heavens, and inly laugh,
At the poor bug-bear death.

BLAIR'S GRAVE.

chasing, with unremitted ardour, the fugitive vanities of time and sense ?

Yet, alas ! many beings, proud of their faculties, and boasting their superior reason —are found, are daily found, immersed in sin, and rivetted to the world ;—heedless of God, of themselves, and immortality ! uninfluenced by every motive of gratitude, unmoved by every argument of interest to obey the voice of religion and truth, and to secure the eternal salvation of their souls ! Oh, that they would indulge one serious reflection ; that they would condescend a while to meditate with us, on the miserable woe reserved for those who forget their God :—on the inexpressible comforts which they shall reap in joy, who love and serve him.

Think then, my fellow creatures, oh ! think of that awful day of which we spoke before,* and imagine, if you can, the horror which must seize the souls of those who hear the dreadful sentence, " Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire !"—Driven from the presence of God, which is itself complete and perfect joy ; driven from the society of those best-beloved friends, whose kind remonstrances they would not hear on earth, and now,—ah ! fatal separation—now must never, never more hear or behold ! And driven thence—aggravating circumstance ! even by the condemnation of that Lord of love, who, desirous to bless and to save,

* In the last Chapter.

freely shed even his own most precious blood, and as freely would have given them life, had they but humbly asked it.*

And were not this, only this expulsion from God, from Christ, from Heaven—of itself a hell sufficient, yet what horrors remain behind!—They shall be driven into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, whose actual and insufferable tortures shall aggravate the mind's inward horror.—Oh! "who can dwell with everlasting burnings!"† yet where, where shall one drop of water be found to cool the parched tongues? who can dwell where devils and condemned souls shall mix their mutual and insulting taunts and upbraidings? where there shall be no society, but a society in common accusations, and where, every gentle passion expelled, the tumultuous workings of despairing minds shall miserably confuse and distract each other.

There too the passions, which were indulged and gratified on earth, shall become severe tormentors, ever craving, yet never finding gratification; ever consuming the anxious heart, themselves never consumed. There the worm of an accusing conscience never dieth; there the flame of self concondemnation and burning guilt shall never, never be quenched.‡

* Mat. xxiii. 37. † Isa. xxxiii. 14.

‡ Isa. lxvi. 24. Mark ix. 44.

Where shall the soul find comfort? shall it be in the companions of its earthly crimes condemned to the same place of woe? Alas, those companions will then be found the sharpest thorns to goad the guilty mind.—Fierce hate will seize the place of former love, and they will curse each other in the bitterness of their souls, as the mutual causes of each other's undoing. But, little consolation being found in accusing others, their upbraidings will speedily recoil upon themselves.* Then only will be heard—(ah me! the very thought is anguish) for ever heard, dire gnashings of teeth, weeping and wailing, execrations and sorrow.—Yet neither is this all: for though peace and rest enter not there; though one gleam of joy shall never pierce through the darkness of their distress; yet all this, and more, might be borne well, very well—did hope, fair comforter! who comes to all, did she but ever come, and cheer the wretched sufferers with the sweet alleviation, that, years on years passed by; that ages upon ages gone; a period will be put to this consummate misery, and the prison-

* Against the Highest fiercely they blaspheme
But then again their own mad choice condemn;
Much they curse God, but curse themselves much more,
In concert the sulphureous torrents roar.

TRAPP.

er of hell be set free. But this hope is withdrawn.*——

Oh eternity, eternity !—how fearful is the thought ! And wilt thou, oh man, for the momentary delusions of sin, plunge into this gulph of punishment unutterable, unending !

At least, my soul, let the prospect be profitable to thyself; and struck abundantly with its horrors—infinitely more alarming than thou canst imagine or paint—turn thy view, and let us contemplate the more pleasing scene, the life eternal, and endless pleasures which the dear Redeemer hath in store for those, who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality.†

But if an inspired apostle, who was favoured with the rapturous prospect, declares, that it hath not even entered into the heart

* In Milton's Paradise Lost, we find the following tremendous description :

——— He (Satan) views
The dismal situation waste and wild :
A dungeon horrible on all sides round
As one great furnance flam'd : yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Serv'd only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades ; where peace
And rest can never dwell ; hope never comes
That comes to all ; but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge fed,
With ever burning sulpher unconsum'd !

BOOK I. V. 60, &c.

† Rom. ii. 7.

of man, to conceive the greatness and excellency of the good things reserved for the righteous; how shall we attempt to spell them out, dark habitants in cottages of clay! May it not suffice to know, that the happiness we expect, will be in every view complete? happiness, without the least mixture or alloy of discontent or dissatisfaction.*—Pleasing truth! yet not entirely sufficient to gratify our thirsty and inquisitive souls.

In condescension to our weakness,—or, perhaps I might say—our strength—(for earnest desires after the knowledge of immortality, doubtless bespeak the soul immortal)—however in great goodness, certainly, the Lord of life has vouchsafed to us some glimpses of that future felicity,† which may render us desirous to know more, and animate every endeavour towards the possession of so exalted a good.

We feel evil so sensibly, that perhaps we can form a better idea of heaven from its negative, than its positive blessings. Who among us is a stranger to sickness, to sorrow and pain? Who among us is a stran-

* 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

† Every one shall enjoy as much as they shall be able to contain, or shall be necessary to complete their joys and perfect their happiness.

This bottomless source of glory and bliss, shall for ever and ever overflow all the glorified in heaven, and satisfy their souls with unspeakable delights.

DRELINGCOURT.

ger to the comfort which would follow an entire exemption from these corporeal evils? Now in heaven, our bodies spiritualized, and our souls made perfect, we shall never know pain of body, or pain of mind: sorrow and tears shall never have admission into those realms of joy.*

But happy as our state should be, freed from those cruel spoilers of our peace, yet of death and dissolution we are certain, the eminence of our bliss would only render the stroke more dreadful. In heaven to secure the perpetuity of our delight, there shall be no more death :† this mortal shall put on immortality—and eternally free from pain and sorrow, we shall fear no end of the transporting scene.

Positive blessings, numberless and unutterable, shall attend these negative ones.—God will not only wipe away all tears from our eyes!—will not only invest us with eternal security in bliss; will not only remove every thing defiling and noxious from those regions of joy; but he himself will dwell among us, and be our God.‡—He, the adorable Father, with the Lamb of Love, and the Spirit of Holiness, shall be the object of our divine contemplation.—He, the blessed and all-glorious Deity, whose presence is joy, and bliss, and heaven, shall be the life, the light, the praise of the new Jerusalem,

* Isa. xxxv. 10. li. 11. † Rev. xxi. 4. ‡ Rev. xxi. 3.

and all its divine inhabitants !* Love shall reign triumphant in every heart, every pure and celestial desire shall be gratified in full: every holy and devout affection shall find its adequate supply; and one uninterrupted scene of thankfulness, serenity, and comfort, shall smile eternally, and eternally be found; where the harps of ten thousand times ten thousand shall unceasingly be tuned to the praises of the Father of mercies, and the Lamb who sitteth on the throne, for ever, and ever.†

Come then, Lord Jesus ! come and put a speedy period to this miserable world of confusion and sin ! Hasten, blessed Lord, hasten thy kingdom; whence every evil shall be wholly removed, and where all good shall be found which can perfect the bliss of men and angels ! Faint and dark, indeed, are our earth-bound conceptions of this consummate glory, and of that which thou hast purchased for thy servants—purchased at a price which may justify our most elevated hopes, even at the price of thine own life, and ever precious blood ! Yet through the riches of thy wondrous grace, the humble Christian, who by faith now enters into rest, hath some sweet foretaste, some pleasing anticipation of the joys to come.

Love, grateful love, looking to thee, feels a transport which enraptures the soul, fills

* Rev. xxii 5. † Rev. v. 11, 12, 13.

it with sweet complacence towards all its fellow-creatures; and makes the afflictions of this transitory world, light and easy to be borne—nay, which makes death itself no longer formidable, but devoutly to be wished, as the happy conveyance of an imprisoned spirit to its God and its hope: to its freedom and perfection: to its dear departed friends, and all the joys of a blissful immortality.

Give me, oh! give me divine love, the bountiful bestower of every good gift! shall I experience the beginning of heaven in my heart, and die with full persuasion that the fair bud will burst into a perfect blossom—that my joys, begun in grace, will be ere long consummated in glory everlasting.*

For thee, too, my reader, let me offer up this fervent prayer: "Oh mayst thou feel and be made perfect in the love of Christ!" so will thy life be blessed below; so will thy death be comfortable;† so wilt thou be made partaker of thy Saviour's kingdom.

* Grace will complete what grace begins,
To save from sorrows and from sins:
The work that wisdom undertakes,
Eternal mercy ne'er forsakes.

DR. WATTS.

† What wise man would not live the life of the righteous, that his latter end may be like his? that in the agonies of death and in the very jaws of the grave, no disturbing thoughts may discompose him, no guilty fears distract him, but he may go out of the world with all the joyful presages of eternal rest and peace.

SHERLOCK.

Serious and important have been the subjects which have employed our mutual meditations: may they be impressed no less strongly on thy heart than on my own: may they awaken thee, if careless, to a life of devout meditation; may they confirm thee in that life, if happily thou art already devoted to it. This, this you may be certain is the only road to peace; this, this you may rest assured of is the only true wisdom of human nature.

Earnestly wishing thee much success in thy Christian course, I bid thee farewell; and exhort thee to keep thine eyes steadfast on the author and finisher of thy salvation. All besides, will fail and forsake thee.*—But a little while, and as well the hand which hath written, as the eye which reads these lines shall become cold and inactive, and moulder in the dust: speedily, oh my friend, our days will be completed, and we must bid an eternal adieu to all things here below! Then let us live like men conscious of this solemn truth—let us live like those who know they must ere long die; who know that they must live for ever.—So shall we make sure our own salvation;† and, how-

* All, all on earth is shadow, all beyond is substance.
NIGHT THOUGHTS.

† Philip. ii. 12. 2 Pet. i. 10.

ever, strangers to each other here, shall meet and rejoice together in that blissful kingdom above, where sorrow and affliction shall be known no more.

THE END.

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